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GREAT MODERN PREACHERS.

GREAT MODERN PREACHERS.

Sketches and Criticisms.

"Few sermons are more false or dangerous than those in which the teacher professes to impress his audience by showing 'how much there is in a verse.' If he examined his own heart closely before beginning, he would often find that his real desire was to show how much he, the expounder, could make out of the verse. But entirely honest and earnest men often fall into the same error. They have been taught that they should always look deep, and that Scripture is full of hidden meanings; and they easily yield to the flattering conviction that every chance idea which comes into their heads in looking at a word is put there by Divine agency. Hence they wander away into what they believe to be an inspired meditation, but which is, in reality, a meaningless jumble of ideas, perhaps very proper ideas, but with which the text in question has nothing whatever to do."

JOHN RUSKIN.

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PREFACE.

THE following papers are intended to include a careful survey of the ablest preaching of our time. To this end an attempt has been made to regard it in its representative aspects. There are diversities of preaching as of literature. These diversities have been cheerfully recognised and appreciated according to their respective claims. It was not intended to use these pages for caustic and trenchant criticism. It has been sought to portray such preaching as may be thankfully commended, rather than to furnish entertainment for those who take pleasure in the detection and publication of faults. It is not denied that criticism of the most severe and detailed nature may be of essential service at times; such, however, is not the purport of these sketches.

The greatness of a preacher has not been determined by the size of his congregation. But due regard has been had to the effect produced by the preaching which is here described. It is with acknowledged, rather than with obscure talent, that this book is concerned. There are great preachers in remote and unfrequented places whose merits fame has not

and may never acknowledge. Their work and claims wait for higher recognition and an ampler reward than the world can bestow.

No review of the theological opinions of the several preachers was contemplated; therefore, they have been selected from various churches. Sometimes it has been necessary to remember the relation of certain portions of the preaching under examination to particular doctrinal or ecclesiastical opinions; but only so far as such considerations might help in the better understanding of the preaching itself.

It only remains to add an expression of the hope that these essays towards a fair comprehension of the true sources and secrets of the best pulpit power of the present age may be of some service to both preachers and hearers.

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GREAT MODERN PREACHERS.

The Rev. Alexander Maclaren, B.A.,

MANCHESTER.

THE Baptist Church has been able to boast of many eminent preachers. It is partly to be accounted for, perhaps, through the intensity of conviction which is generally to be associated with the religious life and opinions of the Baptist people. They have less than other religious sects, taken up with their profession from any slight preferences which may have been conceived for some interesting phase of truth. What they hold, they hold with the firm grasp of the whole mind. From the time of their earliest history as a separate and recognised religious community, they have been known for their tenacious reverence for the opinions which they have professed. Let the fact cover a large space; it is fair to say that such tenacity of conviction will materially contribute to the production of unusual pulpit power. Far fewer in numbers, they have yet greatly surpassed the Wesleyan Methodist Church in this respect. They have had in their pulpits some of the ablest preachers of this century. Robert Hall has, perhaps, had no equal in it in respect of what may be called, with a special signification, pulpit eloquence. The whole religious world has heard of him; and to any person who has ever had the slightest conception of the relation of this eloquent man to the preaching of his time, it is a pleasure to meet with any one who used to listen to his sermons in the towns which are associated with his memory. He was a remarkable pulpit phenomenon. Whether it is to be justified or not, those who speak of

him with any amount of enthusiasm generally assign to him the first place among all modern preachers. They have "never heard any one who was his equal." He was unlike all other preachers. There was something about him which cannot be described, which beggars description. John Foster remarked that, "as a preacher, none of those contemporaries who had not seen him in the pulpit, or of his readers in another age, would be able to conceive an adequate idea of Mr. Hall." It will be safe to admit, on the part of those who never saw the greatest preacher of his day, but who can accept the testimony which many consenting witnesses have borne in respect to him, that he was without doubt a preacher whose eloquence centuries would hardly eclipse.

But in our own day the Baptists have had a preacher whose fame has been even more widely spread and acknowledged than that of Mr. Hall. Mr. Spurgeon has addressed a vast audience, and continues to maintain his influence over that order of mind which his preaching has always been designed to affect. A wide interval separates Mr. Spurgeon from Robert Hall. But the former in his way has as strong a claim upon the historian of the pulpit of the nineteenth century as the latter. The stately diction of Hall, and the robust and simple speech of Spurgeon, have each their uses for the Church; and the Church has in neither case been reluctant to acknowledge the use. So long as there are simple people by thousands in our midst to whom ornate eloquence might give pleasure, but could hardly impart profit, it is right that way should be made for and honour done to the man who can utter simple words of wisdom and power to his fellow-men.

Mr. Maclaren, of Manchester, comes between these two eminent preachers. He is unlike them both. Physically he has not the "large built, robust figure," which Foster describes as Mr. Hall's bodily characteristic, nor the burly and capable structure which we all know to be owned by the preacher of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. He is a weak, delicate man, who looks too fragile to bear much of the strain which affects so painfully the life of a popular preacher. His oratory—for

one cannot deny that Mr. Maclaren is at times an orator —lacks many of those elements which distinguish the discourses of the preachers to whom we have referred. He does not adopt that easy and colloquial style which marks Mr. Spurgeon; nor does his eloquence soar to the heights which were reached by Hall; but he has won a position which gives him a full claim to be classed amongst great living preachers.

Mr. Maclaren possesses what we should call *marked and abundant spiritual faculty*—a faculty which imparts to him the power for a ready and full comprehension of spiritual things. It cannot be doubted that some men possess this faculty in a far greater degree than others. It is distributed in as various measure as the purely intellectual quality, or as that loftiest of inspirations to which we have given the name of genius. So endowed, some men from their earliest years have had power to appreciate spiritual themes, and to speak about them as some cannot. We have no difficulty in discerning the distinction between the faculty which makes a great engineer and that which produces the great poet. There are some who, from their very birth, are endowed with the qualities, purely on the spiritual side of their nature, which enable them to deal with the spiritual life of men. Not more convincingly is it brought to our minds that there are some who have capacity or fitness for providing us with houses to live in, or locomotive engines to carry us to our business or pleasure. As you look at Mr. Maclaren, or listen to his voice, you receive the impression that he is born to teach, and show men what they ought to know about their own spiritual being. He could not be a sensualist in any state of society. He must ponder over the matters that concern what we call our spiritual life. That to him is the highest and noblest phase of being. It is with him no shadow, but a grand, substantial thing. It is necessary, it is right, that some should build our houses, plough our fields, dig our gardens, provide us day by day with the necessaries or adornments of life; it is Mr. Maclaren's mission, and the mission of all who are similarly constituted, to speak to the Divine spiritual life which we have within us. Un-

less you are prejudiced unfairly, and are perversely set against the conclusions of your judgment, not to say the ready instincts of your soul, you will concede to him the possession of this power. It is not to be ignored that there are many preachers possessed of considerable force of logic, and skill of oratory, who are not adepts, if we may use the term, in the treatment of the spiritual life. It is known to us all that there are many able men who have made themselves acquainted with the laws of physiology and pathology; who know what relation our physical being sustains to the air we breathe, and the food we eat, as well as all other things which affect us in the ordinary way, but who, for all that, are not qualified as good and helpful physicians. Many men with less acquirements, and even a kind of bungling acquaintance with the special instructions which are imparted to medical students by learned professors, will cure disease with a facility which occasions marvel to those who forget one important truth. There are some who have the faculty of *seeing* what is the matter, when it would take a highly-cultured man a long time to *find it out* by help of his knowledge. And thus it often comes to pass that a bungling, rambling preacher will reveal spiritual faculty which puts to blush the favourite of college halls, and the prodigy of classical or philosophical culture. Mr. Maclaren has this primary qualification of a preacher.

Combined with this spiritual faculty, he has *unusual power for analysing the matters which properly form the subjects of pulpit discourse.* His analytical power is considerable. He does not look at a thing simply as a whole; he must know something about it as it may be separated and distinguished as to its parts. His mind refuses to be limited to such an idea of anything as may be gained by a glance at it from the outside. A human heart is understood by him as if he dissected it. Indeed, he possesses the power for moral and spiritual dissection. We imagine that Mr. Maclaren experiences considerable pain oftentimes in the preparation of his sermons. They evidence much and sustained examination of the themes which pass under his notice. They are not glances, but keen and penetrating examinations of

his subjects; not visions like those which the greatest spirits have sometimes had of God and truth—that is, more inspirations than discourses; flashings forth and wellings up of greater thoughts and vaster conceptions than most of us are ever privileged to receive. He does not speak like one who has been rapt and absorbed in a contemplation; but rather like one who has been interested in the perception of certain aspects of truth which come to his mind as it sends a keen gaze fearlessly down into the very heart of his subject.

In a sermon of very remarkable impressiveness on "The Last Pleading of Love," we gain a full idea of Mr. Maclaren's analytical genius. This sermon is founded upon the words addressed by our Lord to Judas when he approached Him on the betrayal night—"Friend, wherefore art thou come?" In the introduction he supplies illustration not only of his faculty of spiritual insight, but of analytical skill. Such a presentation of a theme is sure to awaken attention. He remarks that the general impression formed of Judas is that he was a deliberate and atrocious monster; that the "awful picture which the great Italian poet draws of him as alone in hell, shunned even there, as guilty beyond all others, expresses the general feeling about him." The efforts to explain his enormous crime on the basis of ambition which aimed at the imperial exaltation of Christ, are strong evidence of the public sentiment with respect to such base treachery. He feels that these attempts only compel us to loathe his guilt with a deeper abhorrence. Still, other emotions should have way. None were ready on the last night in the upper room to suspect him of such base betrayal. "The process of corruption was unseen by all eyes but Christ's." The awful depths of crime were reached by slow degrees. "As for his guilt, that is in other hands than ours. As for his fate, let us copy the solemn and pitying reticence of Peter, and say 'that he might go to *his own* place'—the place that belongs to him, and that he is fit for, wherever that may be. As for the growth and development of his sin, let us remember that we have all of us one human heart, and that the possibilities of crime as dark are in us all."

Christ met the treacherous kiss of Judas with the question in the text. It is a last appeal to the wretched traitor, intended to tear away the veil of sophistication before his eyes, which prevented a clear perception of his deep crime. "These words are the last effort of the Divine patience to win back even the traitor." Christ spoke thus to the guilty man that He might suggest to him something for his rescue from the awful gulf into which he was about to plunge. The following passage shows with how much skill and pains Mr. Maclaren has looked at the workings of a human heart and conscience:—

"The loving hand laid on the heart-strings is followed by a strong stroke on conscience. The heart vibrates most readily in answer to gentle touches; the conscience in answer to heavier, as the breath that wakes the chords of an Æolian harp would pass silent through the brass of a trumpet. 'Wherefore art thou come?'—if to be taken as a question at all is either, 'What hast thou come to do?' or, 'Why hast thou come to do it?' Perhaps it may be fairly taken as including both. But, at all events, it is clearly an appeal to Judas to make him see what his conduct really is in itself, and possibly in its motive too. And this is the constant effort of the love of Christ—to get us to say to ourselves the real name of what we are about.

"We cloak our sins from ourselves with many wrappings, as they swathe a mummy in voluminous folds. And of these veils one of the thickest is woven by our misuse of words to describe the very same thing by different names, according as we do it, or another man does it. Almost all moral actions—the thing to which we can apply the words right or wrong—have two or more names, of which the one suggests the better, and the other the worse, side of the action. For instance, what in ourselves we call prudent regard for our own interest, we call in our neighbour narrow selfishness; what in ourselves is laudable economy, in him is miserable avarice. We are impetuous, he is passionate; we generous, he lavish; we are clever men of business, he is a rogue; we sow our wild oats and are gay, he is dissipated. So we cheat ourselves by more than half-

transparent veils of our own manufacture, which we fling round the ugly features and misshapen limbs of these sins of ours, and we are made more than ever their bond-slaves thereby."

His mode of treating a subject as to its arrangement is generally of a cumulative and climactic nature, based upon the analysis to which he brings every theme which at all requires it. It is not a fanciful or pretty set of divisions which would charm you with its ingenuity; but very useful and sensible—serviceable and suggestive both for preacher and hearer.

We are also impressed with *the deep feeling and real imaginative power which are conspicuous generally in his sermons.* The message of God to sinful men is often a burden upon the preacher's heart. He appears before his congregation with words to utter in their hearing, which will take their form and tone from his own heart. They are electric with the thrill of its own chords; they pulsate with the life that beats in his own breast. It is not cold Scotch logic and stern philosophy which he brings with him into his pulpit. There are places in which they might probably find a suitable field for exercise; but not before his fellows, Mr. Maclaren thinks, when he has to bring them to the feet of the world's Redeemer, and claim their loyalty for God. He is not a passionless preacher of Jesus Christ, uttering the freest, tenderest message which love has ever spoken, as if he were offering goods at auction, or making bargains without any personal interest in the result. How much real feeling there is in the following words:—"I know what eternity is, though I cannot define the word to satisfy a metaphysician. The little child, taught by some grandmother Lois, in a cottage, knows what she means when she tells him 'you will live for ever,' though both scholar and teacher would be puzzled to put it into other words. When we say eternity flows round this bank and shoal of time, men know what we mean. Heart answers to heart; and in each heart lies that solemn thought—for ever!" There is the stir of deep feelings in those words. They reveal a mind that knows what it is to have communion with the thoughts that lie in the deep wells of the heart. What fulness of

feeling there is in some sentences, which occur towards the close of the very impressive sermon from which we have already quoted on "The Last Pleading of Love:" —"Every pleading of Christ's grace, whether by providences or by books, or by His own Word, does something with us. It is never vain. Either it melts or it hardens. The sun either scatters the summer morning mists, or it rolls them into heavier folds, from whose livid depths the lightning is flashing by mid-day." There is imaginative beauty in those conceptions. The heart's deep feeling kindles into passion; the spirit of the preacher passes into a state in which to think is to feel; and life is changed from its prosaic condition into one of pathos, and tenderness, and grace.

Sometimes Mr. Maclaren is disposed to argue. He is troubled at the sight of a sophism. He longs to hunt it down; to track it to its foul hiding-place, and strangle it with a grip from which usually there is no escape. We do not prize his power so much when it passes into argument. Without any intention of using the word in a conventional sense, it is seldom, if ever, profitable. When feeling has way, and imagination glows like a fire within the heart, then the preacher has hold upon men, and may sway them as he will. God works through preaching unto the welfare of human spirits. Preaching is then known to be the very power of God.

There is not the same wealth and beauty of feeling which is ever present in the sermons of a Baptist preacher, who was not mentioned in the introduction to this article, the late Mr. Hull, of Lynn. No man has been so near to Robertson of Brighton as he. There was the same glowing perception of spiritual things, the same plaintive note ever running through the varied melody, the same high-reaching aspiration of the soul. Mr. Hull did not argue, nor was he pungent and pugnacious, as perhaps Mr. Maclaren is often inclined to be. That preacher at Lynn, had he been spared, so far as we can judge, would have had no peer in these islands at the present time. But the sensitive and delicate nature could not abide amidst the unfriendly atmosphere of a world like this. God takes His tenderest and rarest spirits after a while to the gentler world,

where they may grow and flourish unchecked for evermore. There is more ruggedness in the nature of Maclaren; more culture, but less native grace; more fire, but less light and beauty.

His analytical skill and fervid feeling, too, are seen mingling in the following passage from the sermon on Judas:—

"It must have been a strangely mean and dastardly nature, as well as a coarse and cold one, that could think of fixing on the kiss of affection as the concerted sign to point out their victim to the legionaries. Many a man who could have planned and executed the treason would have shrunk from that; and many a man who could have borne to be betrayed by his own familiar friend would have found that heartless insult worse to endure than the treason itself. But what a picture of perfect patience and unruffled calm we have here, in that the answer to the poisonous, hypocritical embrace was this moving word! The touch of the traitor's lips has barely left His cheek; but not one faint passing flush of anger tinges it. He is perfectly self-oblivious, absorbed in other thoughts, and among them in pity for the guilty wretch before Him. His words have no agitation in them, no instinctive recoil from the pollution of such a salutation. They have grave rebuke; but it is rebuke which derives its very force from the appeal to former companionship. Christ still recognises the ancient bond, and is true to it. He will still plead with this man, who has been beside Him long; and, though His heart be wounded, yet He is not wroth, and He will not cast him off. If this were nothing more than a picture of human friendship it would stand alone, above all other records that the world cherishes in its inmost heart, of the affection that never fails, and is not soon angry."

How beautifully he brings out the few great thoughts which underlie his discourses! He does not allow you to forget them. They are pressed home upon your conscience and heart. The true man who undertakes the work of a preacher will ever be concerned for the right treatment of men's consciences. It will not be necessary for him to treat them as if they could bear

any strain. If he so act, the other portions of that complex inner life of ours will rise up in protest, and they will help the overburdened conscience to fling off the load, and to assert an awful independence of God. Mr. Maclaren does not try it too much, as Dr. Newman was ever likely to do when he preached those powerful sermons before the University of Oxford.

It is impossible to avoid the impression which is made upon us as we come into contact with *the refined intellectual power* of Mr. Maclaren. Feeling is backed in this case by thorough intellectual culture. You are satisfied with the mental and spiritual equilibrium. Sentiment and emotion do not approach you in a way which contradicts your intellectual conviction and habits. There is in Mr. Maclaren what may be termed a richness of evangelical feeling; but this is joined with a cultivated style of thought and expression which qualifies him to address any kind of audience. The balance of power is fairly maintained. You never feel that you are listening to an essay; but you are not required to pay attention to sermons which ignore your intellectual life. We once heard the most popular of modern preachers say that it was incumbent upon preachers to "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." "It was," said he, "a clear injunction of the moral law—'Thou shalt do no manner of work;' and preachers had no business to require their hearers to work with their brains in listening to them any more than with brains and hands in performing the duties of daily life." Few people, making any kind of pretension to the possession of ordinary mental faculty, would accept the inconsiderate dictum. If the thinking is all done for us, we are certain to lose the advantage which always follows the employment of faculties with which God has endowed us. It would be a sad day for us all if preaching generally were to be conformed to that emasculate type which would lead men of intellect and judgment to believe that religion itself had no intellectual basis whatever. In a recent letter from Germany, Dr. Joseph P. Thompson, the late able and excellent minister of Broadway Tabernacle, New York, gives it as his opinion that American preaching attains what he

conceives to be an honourable position as compared with the preaching of all Protestant countries, by virtue of its intellectual basis. None who know anything of Dr. Thompson will deny to him the right to an opinion upon this matter. He is himself a very admirable preacher, a thoughtful and careful writer, and one of the most fluent and choice speakers to whom it has ever been our lot to listen.

Mr. Maclaren is as intellectual as he is emotional. The most intellectual of his hearers can never complain of the want of pabulum for their critical and thoughtful tastes. To him men and women are endowed with minds as well as hearts. He administers milk to babes; but he is markedly distinguished as a purveyor of meat for strong men. This is manifest in the skilful and able way in which he weds his thoughts to words. It is done, not by the delicate care of a mere *words-ter*, but with the skill of one who has thoughts worthy of expression, and aims earnestly at giving them the fairest and happiest expression which he can achieve. We are often deeply impressed with the rare beauty of his style. It has not the exact and perfect form which some have attained; nor the limpid clearness and beauty of such sermons as Mr. Martineau's; but it is very careful and beautiful in its own way.

What a tender passage, very sweetly and appositely expressed, occurs in his sermon on "The Brevity of Life," founded upon the pathetic words of the Psalmist —"Surely every man walketh in a vain show. . . . I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were":—

"'A stranger with Thee!' Then we have a constant companion and an abiding presence. We may be solitary, and necessarily remote from the polity of the land; we may feel, amid all the visible things of earth, as if foreigners; we may not have a foot of soil, not even a grave for our dead; companionships may dissolve, and warm hands grow cold, and their close clasp relax —what then? He is with us still; He will join us as we journey, even when our hearts are sore with loss; He will walk with us by the way, and make our chill

hearts glow; He will sit with us at the table, however humble the meal, and He will not leave us when we discern Him. Strangers we are, indeed, here; but not solitary, for we are 'strangers with Thee.' As in some ancestral home, in which a family has lived for centuries, son after father has rested in these great chambers, and been safe behind the strong walls, so, age after age, they who love Him abide in God: 'Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations!'"

There is here a combination of intellectual taste and tender feeling which ever form the most powerful style of pulpit eloquence. With the same kind of felicitous and impressive manner, full of intellectual perception and judgment, he uses the following words in a sermon on "The Christian Life":—

"You and I write our lives as if on one of those manifold writers which you use. A thin, filmy sheet *here*, a bit of black paper below it; but the writing goes through upon the next page; and when the blackness that divides two worlds is swept away *there*, the history of each life written by ourselves remains legible in eternity. And the question is, what sort of autobiography are we writing for the revelation of that day, and how far do our circumstances help us to transcribe fair in our lives the will of our God and the image of our Redeemer?

"If, then, we have once got hold of that principle that all which is—summer and winter, storm and sunshine, possession and loss, memory and hope, work and rest, and all the other antitheses of life—is equally the product of His will, equally the manifestation of His mind, equally His means for our discipline, then we have the amulet and talisman which will preserve us from the fever of desire, and the shivering fits of anxiety as to things which perish. And, as they tell of a Christian father, who, riding by one of the great lakes of Switzerland all day long, on his journey to the church council that was absorbing his thoughts, said towards evening to the deacon who was pacing beside him, 'Where is the lake?' so you and I, journeying along by the margin of this great flood of things when wild storm sweeps across it, or when the sunbeams glint upon its blue

waters, and 'birds of peace sit brooding on the charmed wave,' shall be careless of the changeful sea if the eye looks beyond the visible, and beholds the unseen, the unchanging real presences, that make glory in the darkest lives, and 'sunshine in the shady place.'"

We have only to add to these impressions of the secret of his power, our conviction of the intensity of his soul as he deals with the important subjects of his discourses. It is compressed and concentrated earnestness. There is no bustle, noise, and show in it, but it is as real as earnestness can be. He once said:—"The extremest power is silent. The mightiest force in all the universe is the force which has neither speech nor language. . . . Thunder and lightning are child's play compared with the energy which goes to make the falling dews and quiet rains." So he speaks and acts with this great truth in view. He is ever driving towards one point; that he aims at with the full power of his whole nature. His hearers cannot escape the impression which the knowledge of this makes upon their minds. The spell of his speech upon them is the spell of a soul which is alive with unmistakable vitality. If this man does not mean what he says, then preacher can hardly ever have meant it. To save you from the power of your sins, and to aid you in reaching towards a higher and better life, he uses these words so beautifully and aptly selected and arranged: he is seeking, by the help of preaching, to move and guide you as you may need either impulse or direction. We must add the wish that our English pulpits were more adorned with such preaching as that of Mr. Maclaren; and that wherever any are striving to preach in the same real and intensely intellectual and spiritual way, they may be acknowledged and encouraged by earnest and loving hearers. In these times of stirring strife and daring inquiry, the pulpit cannot hold its place unless it have such elements in a greater advance upon the days that are gone. This generation must be approached, not as if it were to be rocked in a cradle, but as needing light and help in the greatest matters of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

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It is an interesting question as to what is the position taken by the Established Church as a preaching and teaching Church. She has had her great preachers of the past, and they did their share of the work which contributed to the elevation and enlightenment of our people. A Church which has had a Jeremy Taylor, an Andrewes, a Barrow, a Ken, and a Wilson, and in more recent times, Simeon, Bickersteth, F. W. Robertson, Archer Butler, Newman, and Melville preaching in her pulpits, need not be timid in respect to her claims. But probably at no time has she had a larger number of eloquent men discoursing upon religion than now. It is enough to mention Canon Liddon and Dean Hook, Mr. Stopford Brooke and Mr. Haweis; Bishops Magee and Alexander; the Dean of Ripon and Dean Stanley, to uphold her claims. There may not be one who possesses the kind of philosophical acumen which distinguished Archer Butler, the unction of Charles Simeon, or the marvellous inspiration of the greatest preacher of his time—Robertson of Brighton. But there are men with power and earnestness enough to claim for their Church the recognition of all who place any value upon earnest and lofty eloquence. When these men come to St. Paul's or the Abbey, thousands flock to hear them. Their voices can impress the largest audience which can be gathered to listen to them. The plea which has been often urged against her clergymen, that they are out of their element when they ascend her pulpits (and which is too true in thousands of instances), is almost forgotten as these leaders of popular enthusiasm urge the message which is the burden of

their preaching. In some respects the Church of England may not, perhaps, have favoured the culture of pulpit power. The class to which at times she has mainly made her appeal has rather discouraged popular eloquence, and has preferred that the sermons should be a quiet, unpretentious, passionless appendage to her incomparable liturgy. Her ideal clergyman has too often been the man who will study to avoid any disturbance of the religious life, or, as we should say, slumber, of his parish. Social amenity has been valued in the Anglican communion at as high a price as in the Catholic. It was a slight addition to the quiet gratification of attendance at church, if a man read well; but any innovations in the way of enthusiasm, whether with a written sermon or without it, were likely to be resented as an unwarrantable presumption. Passion and fervour were relegated to the hustings, upon which Church and State might be defended with any amount of immoderate feeling.

That day has nearly passed away. Church pulpits ring forth energetic appeals, charged with the fiery zeal of men who preach as those who are concerned as to the reception which is obtained for their message. And no section of the Church has been more fruitful of such preaching than that which connects its modern history with what is termed the Anglican revival. The last most distinguished light of that branch of the Church is the eloquent Canon of St. Paul's, whose pulpit power it is now proposed to examine.

It is impossible to listen to this preacher for ever so short a time, or to read a passage of his sermons, without receiving the impression that he is in perfect sympathy with his work, and the themes upon which he speaks. All his preaching is marked by unqualified earnestness. He does not address you upon the most important of all subjects with about as much interest as if it mattered not whether the words were heard and believed. To him it is a consideration of unspeakable consequence that his hearers should both understand and receive what he utters to them for their benefit. He has no interests of his own to serve. If it were not

that he conceives a preacher's work to be the greatest which a man can accept at the hands of the Almighty, he would have employed those large gifts of eloquence, as he might have done with signal success, in our courts of law, or in our House of Parliament. Neither Mr. Gladstone nor Lord Selborne possesses a more considerable power of eloquence than this eminent preacher. Both law and politics may, in the estimation of some, furnish arenas for the display of feats of oratory which the pulpit cannot supply, and enable a man of Dr. Liddon's stamp to accomplish great good thereby for his fellow-men; but none can doubt that he sets a higher mark upon the work of a preacher than these could ever reach. It is not with him a duty, for which it is enough if a man ascends the sacred platform in the solemn temple of God, bearing in his hand the manuscript from which he may read in any manner, however careless and easy, the message which he brings to human souls. He rather speaks—as, indeed, all preachers should speak—as if upon the acceptance of his message depended the highest and truest welfare of his fellow-men. You *must* listen to his voice and look upon his face. There may be flaws even in *his* reasoning, and his rhetoric might lack some qualities which you would desire it to possess; but he is thoroughly in earnest. If he misses his mark with you, the fault does not lie in lack of earnestness. Whether it be St. Paul's or the Abbey pulpit, that of his University or of some ordinary parish church, he is alike in earnest. You may have the fullest regard for the "prayers," but you would not be away from the sermon. There can be no waste of your valuable time in listening to a man who preaches as though your eternal interests hung upon the energy with which he delivered God's message to your soul.

It is not possible to exhibit the preacher's earnestness by means of quotations from his sermons. You take the impression from hearing or reading them. The tone and spirit of his preaching evidence his deep conviction of the importance and grandeur of the subjects upon which he speaks. A sceptic would not dream of

suspecting that he had any other ends to serve than to carry the same conviction home to the minds of those who listen to him. There may be the manner of an ecclesiastic, but there is pervading every word the intenseness of an honest man's absolute sympathy with the Gospel which he preaches.

Dr. Liddon possesses a very fervent and eloquent style. It requires but a slight acquaintance with his preaching to receive this view of his power. He has the skill and grace of an orator. It would seem that he occasionally dispenses in part with his manuscript—perhaps altogether; but, as a rule, he relies upon it. There is too much impetuosity and fire in his eloquence to allow of the extempore expression of his thoughts in a manner which would befit the perfect need of his tasteful and cultured mind. He is an undoubted rhetorician in the best sense of the term. He adopts a style which possesses the charm of imparting enthusiasm to his hearers. His sermons are not polished and elegant essays. He himself says, in the preface to the volume of Sermons:—"An essay belongs to general literature; a sermon is the language of the Church. A sermon is confined within narrow limits; and its necessarily rhetorical character renders an economical use of its scanty opportunities impossible. Each sermon must suggest many topics which it cannot afford to discuss." With him it is not enough to have a few clear and thoughtful views of a subject, and then to express these with some commendable energy and feeling. He knows that a congregation is only to be reached and moved in the fullest measure by the use of such a mode of speech as is adapted to the purpose. Eloquence is as distinct as poetry from other forms of literary composition. It is easy, and seems natural to observe, that, granted a man has an utter conviction of what God has revealed for human help and salvation, and a burning desire to make it known and felt by others, he will soon discover the best mode of preaching. There are many people who never fail to remind us that Paul, and Peter, and John were unacquainted with the rules which are laid down by the professors of rhetoric. They had, we are

told, those indispensable and sufficient qualifications—strong convictions, and intense love for human souls. It is unfair to define the limits of Paul's acquaintance with the culture of his age. We cannot hesitate to admit that Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men." They were endowed with unusual spiritual gifts, and trained in circumstances which cannot arise again. Because some men have worked wonders by means of the most imperfect and awkward appliances, it is not to be argued that all who make similar attempts should refuse to employ the best helps which can be obtained. The old astronomers would have been more than grateful for a modern telescope; and ancient navigators would have gladly used our compasses and charts. We have not to read much of Dr. Liddon's discourses to become aware of the perfect mastery which he has gained of the best methods of pulpit eloquence. His sermons often open with a passage which at once engages the attention of his hearers. It is not a sacred essay to which you are asked to listen, weighted with deep truth, and invested with an exquisite grace. He appeals to you; he speaks with the consciousness of your presence; he has seen you while he has written the words which he now utters. Instead of trying to separate himself from men, and looking at truths in some unrelated forms, he has considered how it bears upon you in respect of the deep wants of your nature. That is, his style partakes of the glow which every public speaker should secure in view of the object which he has to attain. The essayist is absorbed in his subject; and when it approaches the region of his sentiments may excite some unusual emotion in the heart; but he who speaks to his fellow-men, whether from platform or pulpit, will think of them, and receive the influence of their needs, and questionings, and desires. The personal emotional elements will be both impressive and abundant in their operation. He will take impressions from his audience, the place in which he is preaching, and the season which is passing.

What vigour of conception and expression there is in the following passage from a sermon preached on Easter Day, 1869. There is presented to us in the whole para-

graph a fine illustration of the way in which he sustains and expands an argument, so as to impart to it a fervour and depth of feeling which prevent an audience from being wearied with mere reasoning :—

"Now, in order to do justice to the evidential power of Christ's resurrection, which the apostles felt themselves, and communicated to others with such astonishing results, let us think of some holy and venerable friend, better far than the best we have ever known in life. Let us suppose that he could address us in this way : 'I am shortly going to die ; but after I am dead, and you have closed my eyes, and laid me in my coffin, and carried me to my grave, I shall, on a given day, burst upward from my tomb, and appear among you ; I shall appear, not once only, not only for a moment, but again and again, to talk, and walk, and eat, and hold with you all the endearing converse of bygone years. And if I have ever told you anything that you have thought hard, or strange, about truth and duty, about the character of God, about the nature and destiny of the soul ; nay, if I have gone beyond this, and have spoken of myself and my relationship to God and to mankind, and of my coming empire over the souls of men in ages yet future ; the warrant and justification of all this will be plain to you, when I really do rise from my grave ; you will be satisfied then, if not before, that I am entitled to speak as I have spoken to you.' Well, my brethren, I will not attempt to say how we should receive a prediction of this kind ; I will only say that it would require the most spotless of lives, the most penetrating of spiritual intelligences in the speaker, and perhaps a great deal besides, to make us even patient under it—patient enough to wait for its verification. But let us suppose that it is verified ; that our friend does die ; that there is no room for mistake about his death ; that he is duly buried ; and that then, when all seems over, and in our thoughts, as in reality the tomb has closed over his body, he actually does return to life ; that he introduces himself to us, one by one, as we can bear to see him, and becomes to us all, and more than all, that he was in past years, before he leaves us

again for good. Yet this was in substance what happened to the apostles. Thus their extraordinary experience was the tremendous force which made a few peasants and teachers, selected from the lower and middle classes of a remote province, feel themselves equal to nothing less than the moral and intellectual conquest of the world. For them the resurrection warranted the truth of Christ's mission, the truth of Christianity. All that Christ had said, all that He had promised and foretold, was raised by it to the high level of undisputed certainty. With the mighty power of such a miracle, so certified, impelling and sustaining them, they went forward—they could not but go forward—to win the attention, the acquiescence, the faith of men in the truths which it attested. What became of them personally it mattered not. If they succeeded, it would be the strength of the risen Jesus. If they failed, the mighty Risen One would yet succeed. There it was, ever before them, the imperious, the invigorating fact, that He had broken forth from His grave as He said He would; and it only remained for them, as it remains for us at this hour, to do justice to the evidential power of His resurrection."

In the peroration of another sermon on the "Power of the Resurrection" we get a vivid conception of his eloquence. And, as is the case so frequently with him, he approaches with the skill of a great preacher some of the negative and distressing ideas which have laid so strong a hold upon the faith and feeling of our time.

"The power of the resurrection! We live in a day when men ask for positive grounds of thought and action; and the power before us is the power, not of a sentiment, but of a fact. A sentiment has its day, if it be only a sentiment; the phases of mere feeling, which pass rapidly over the generations of men, are like the forms of the clouds above our heads, beautiful but evanescent. But a fact, such as the resurrection, remains like the sun in the heavens, which, though it may be deemed a commonplace and uninteresting thing by a race of barbarians, is the daily study and wonder of your astronomers. It remains, through days or years

of neglect, to claim at the last that vast homage of the mind and heart of man which rightfully belongs to it; to make itself felt in thought and practice; to control our dealings with each other; to define our relationship to God. Thus, while it hallows the things of time, it unveils and warrants the glories of eternity; and, at the least, it loses nought of its surpassing interest as the years flow on, and we ourselves draw nearer to that material world, whither so many loved ones have already preceded us. For, more than any other truth in the Christian Creed, it bids us wait and work, trustfully, patiently—

"'Till with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which we have loved long since and lost awhile.'

"O Thou who art indeed risen from the dead, Eternal Jesus, build up, invigorate the faith of this people, at the door of Thy empty sepulchre; open our earth-bound eyes to the mighty world wherein Thou and Thou alone art King; and then crucify us, if need be, to the things of time, that with Thee and by Thee, both here and hereafter, we may indeed know the true, the resistless power of Thy glorious resurrection."

The Bampton Lectures on "The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," preached at Oxford in 1866, are replete with eloquence of the highest order. The argument of the book is sustained by varied and abundant learning; but this forms no difficulty in the way of giving to this course of lectures the fullest charm of vivid and lofty eloquence. If they had been delivered to a popular audience, they would hardly have been more impressive and interesting. And some of the passages are among the most splendid which sacred eloquence has uttered in our generation. It is difficult to forbear quoting a number of them possessing almost equal felicity and power. The following treats of the collision between the teaching of the Gospel and Paganism:—

"Was such an epoch, such a world, such a 'civilisation' as this calculated to 'force success' on an institution like 'the kingdom of heaven,' or on a doctrine such as that of the New Testament? If, indeed, Christianity had been an 'idyll' or 'pastoral,' the product of the simple peasant life and of the bright sky of Galilee,

there is no reason why it should not have attracted a momentary interest in literary circles, although it certainly would have escaped from any more serious trial at the hands of statesmen than an unaffected indifference to its popularity. But what was the Gospel as it met the eye and fell upon the ear of Roman Paganism? 'We preach,' said the apostle, 'Christ crucified—to the Jews an offence, and to the Greeks a folly. I determined not to know anything among you Corinthians, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' Here was a truth linked inextricably with other truths equally 'foolish' in the apprehension of Pagan intellect, equally condemnatory of the moral degradation of Pagan life. In the preaching of the apostles, Jesus crucified confronted the intellectual cynicism, the social selfishness, and the sensualist degradation of the Pagan world. To its intellect He said, 'I am the truth.' He bade its proud self-confidence bow before His intellectual royalty. To its selfish, heartless society, careful only for bread and amusement, careless of the agonies which gave interest to the amphitheatre, He said, 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you.' Disinterested love of slaves, of barbarians, of political enemies, of social rivals, love of man as man, was to be a test of true discipleship. And to the sensuality, so gross, and yet often so polished, which was the very law of individual Pagan life, He said, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me;' 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell!' Sensuality was to be dethroned, not by the negative action of a prudential abstinence from indulgence, but by the strong positive force of self-mortification. Was such a doctrine likely, of its own weight, and without any assistance from on high, to win its way to acceptance? Is it not certain that debased souls are so far from aspiring naturally towards that which is holy, elevated, and pure, that they feel towards it only hatred and repulsion? Certainly Rome was unsatisfied with her old national idolatries; but, if

she turned her eyes towards the East, it was not to welcome the religion of Jesus, but the impure rites of Isis and Seraphis, of Mithra and Astarte. The Gospel came to her unbidden, in obedience to no assignable attraction in Roman society, but simply in virtue of its own expansive, world-embracing force. Certainly Christianity answered to the moral wants of the world, as it really answers at this moment to the true moral wants of all human beings, however unbelieving or immoral they may be. The question is, whether the world so clearly recognised its real wants as forthwith to embrace Christianity. The physician was there; but did the patient know the nature of his own malady sufficiently well not to view the presence of the physician as an intrusion? Was it likely that the old Roman society, with its intellectual pride, its social artlessness, and its unbounded personal self-indulgence, should be enthusiastically in love with a religion which made intellectual submission, social unselfishness, and personal mortification its very fundamental laws? The history of the three first centuries is the answer to that. The kingdom of God was no sooner set up in the Pagan world than it found itself surrounded by all that combines to make the progress of a doctrine or of a system impossible. The thinkers were opposed to it: they denounced it as a dream of folly. The habits and passions of the people were opposed to it: it threatened somewhat seriously to interfere with them. There were venerable institutions, coming down from a distant antiquity, and gathering around them the stable and thoughtful elements of society: these were opposed to it, as to an audacious innovation, as well as from an instinctive perception that it might modify or destroy themselves. National feeling was opposed to it; it flattered no national self-love; it was to be the home of human kind; it was to embrace the world; and as yet the nation was the highest conception of associated life to which humanity had reached. Nay, religious feeling itself was opposed to it; for religious feeling had been enslaved by ancient falsehoods. There were worships, priesthoods, beliefs, in long-established possession; and they were not likely

to yield without a struggle. Picture to yourselves the days when the Temple of the Capitoline Jupiter was still thronged with worshippers, while often the Eucharist could only be celebrated in the depths of the Catacombs. It was a time when all the administrative power of the Empire was steadily concentrated upon the extinction of the name of Christ. What were then to a human eye the future prospects of the kingdom of God? It had no allies, like the sword of the Mahommedan, or like the congenial mysticism which welcomed the Buddhist, or like the politicians who strove to uphold the falling Paganism of Rome. . . . . Before she could triumph in the Western world, the soil of the Empire had to be reddened by Christian blood. Ignatius of Antioch given to the lions at Rome; Polycarp of Smyrna condemned to the flames; the martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, and among them the tender Blandina extorting by her fortitude the admiration of the very heathen; Perpetua and Felicitas at Carthage conquering a mother's love by a stronger love for Christ,—these are but samples of the noble army which vanquished heathendom."

Such writing as this has passion and force enough in it to compel men to listen. He who would write or speak thus must have his soul fired with a glowing sense of the grandeur of his subject. Only thus could he expatiate upon the lessons of history so as to kindle in other breasts a corresponding feeling of admiration for whatever of heroism, patience, or devotion he seeks to record and extol.

This able preacher does not put aside the serious questionings and difficulties of modern sceptical or religious thought. He looks at them fairly and fully. He is not afraid of them, but strives his utmost to examine them, and find out their weakness or strength. He deals with them in a very earnest and energetic way, truly characteristic of all the movements of his vigorous mind. He is always loyal to what he holds to be the true faith of a Christian, and does not withhold his high commendation from those who differ upon what he regards as non-vital points. He is awake to all the tendencies of modern thought, and marks with watchful

eye the track along which philosophy in these days makes her pathway. The movements of our modern life, the daring and defiant attacks which are ever being made upon the Christianity in which he so devoutly and profoundly believes; his conception of the tendencies of our national life and thought at this time; and his unstinted sympathy with the rights and privileges of all classes in our population, give him a strong hold upon his hearers.

The following passage from a sermon on "The Law of Progress," preached in 1864, will, in part, illustrate these remarks:—

"Some, alas! there are, who, in the name of progress, would refuse Him that adoration which He has claimed from fifty generations of Christians. They would tell you that He, the Eternal Truth, was in His day the ignorant patron of worthless and even immoral legends. Others, again, there are, who, since they no longer profess to bend the knee before Him, would fain stoop from their assumed superiority of knowledge or culture, to refashion the sacred form of Him whom we meet and worship in the New Testament. They are eager to disentwine from His bleeding brow that crown of thorns which is at once the sign of His redemptive love, and of His sublime and severe morality. They would fain bring Him forth to the modern multitudes crowned with laurel or crowned with roses; since the Christ of the new theology, like some Pagan god, must smile an approval upon the unbeliefs and the immoralities of the actual European world, which the Christ of the Gospel and of the Church has already condemned. Yet what is this vaunted progress but the very triumph of a real reaction? Surely it *is* reaction against the purest light which can lighten the human understanding, against the kindliest love that can open and warm the human heart, against the truest law by submission to which the human will may regain its strength and excellence. Surely it *is* reaction against the progressive work of Christ our Lord in human society, and in the human soul. A reaction assuredly which, if it be not checked by the faith and love of Christians, who hope to live and to die in the peace of Christ, will carry us

back, first to the uncertainties and the despair of a paganised philosophy, and then, in due time, when all that elevates man has been fairly swept away, to the ferocities and lusts of a paganised society.

"And if at times our thoughts wander into these more anxious forebodings, let us be well assured that He who reigns in heaven is Lord also of the wills and hearts of men. Let us be certain that the years to come are our own, no less, yea rather than the years which are gone past, if we will only trust Him. If the past of England and of Europe is ours, so, if we will, ours shall be also the future of the world. For we Christians are no mere archæologists; we are men of hope; we are men of progress."

With more passion and grandeur yet, in the sermon on "The Power of Christ's Resurrection," does he expatiate upon the inadequacy of reason in its efforts to prove the fact of our immortality:—

"Even if it were true that the immortality of the soul, without implying anything as to the body, could be brought home by sheer reason to the convictions of the whole of the human race, still this conviction of the reason, if unaided, would not supply what we need in the presence of death. In times of sorrow the senses and the imagination take the lead, and bid reason, when she is unassisted by faith, fall into the rear. The eye of sense rests day after day upon the increasing ravages of disease; it rests at length upon the pallor, the chill, the disfigurement, the corruption of death. It scans, with something like despair, the expressionless corpse which but yesterday was the home and instrument of a loving spirit. And when all that can meet the eye of sense is at length hidden from sight, the imagination will wander after the funeral hearse; it will hover around the precincts of the tomb; it will even penetrate beneath the soil of the churchyard, beneath the arches of the vault, beneath the boards of the coffin; and it will sit there in its dark agony, tracing from stage to stage the fell work of corruption as it breaks up what was yesterday so animated and beautiful into the loathsome forms of decomposing matter. You may say that this is morbid; but you are yourself in high spirits and in

good health; and the answer to you is that what you deem morbid is often, at times of great anguish, not other than exquisitely human. Reason may still cherish her abstract arguments for immortality; she may push them to the very verge of the Christian Creed itself; but reason cannot hold her own against the energetic agony of imagination and sense, when these would inflict upon the soul their profound despondency. 'It cannot be,' they whisper, 'that there is really a future; it cannot but be that matter, not mind, is really ruler of this universe; contact with death shatters the phantom of immortality—that phantom which is but the creation of human self-love.' So whisper, not reason, but imagination and sense, to the afflicted mourner; and something is wanted, which shall meet the imagination and the senses on their own ground, by visibly reversing that spectacle of death which so painfully depresses them; something is wanted which shall emancipate reason, even in the darkest hours of sorrow, from the empire of these lower faculties, and shall roll back the stone from the door of yon sepulchre of the best hopes of men."

Sometimes in a sentence or two, with the fire of a heart charged to the full limit of its capacity with strong feeling, he expresses his indignation at some great untruth or avows, in strongest language, his reverent confidence in a glorious faith. As, for instance, when he says:—

"Deny the resurrection, and Christianity collapses altogether, as certainly as does an arch when its keystone is removed; and, in place of the Conqueror of death and the Redeemer of souls, there remains only a Jewish Rabbi, whose story has been curiously encrusted with legend, and some of whose sayings are still undoubtedly entitled to attention."

We cannot lose sight of the fact that Dr. Liddon gains authority with his hearers owing to the wealth of learning which he brings to the consideration of every subject. He is the outgrowth of Oxford culture, and well represents her almost unrivalled qualifications for refining and perfecting the minds of her sons. He characterises it in his own language in the "Bampton Lectures" when, referring to our Lord's early training,

he observes:—"Still less did He, during His early manhood, live in any such atmosphere as that of this place, where, interpenetrating all our differences of age and occupation, and even of conviction, there is the magnificent inheritance of a common fund of thought to which, whether we know it or not, we are all constantly and inevitably debtors." Had he not lived long in her halls, and associated with her most gifted scholars and divines, he would not have been able to wield the magical spell, with which he can enchant his most cultivated and accomplished hearers. The aroma of Oxford culture may at once be detected in every fine passage of his sermons. There is the grace, the ease, the freedom, the elasticity of style which is now easily recognised in the speech of all who have passed a few years in that classic home of learning and genius. Oxford speaks through this Canon of St. Paul's, and is justly proud of so distinguished and eloquent a preacher. In the prime and vigour of his years he lives to continue in part the influence which was once exerted by Newman and Pusey, while he adds a more popular and glowing manner, which gives him power over audiences to which they would not have appealed with equal success.

He is not suggestive and original as many of the less known preachers of his own Church have been. There are few sentences which could claim to have the term epigrammatic applied to them, and now and then we feel that, popular and powerful as his eloquence confessedly is, there is some of the inexperience of cloistered life, rendering him unfit to appreciate the greatest difficulties of the human soul. He approaches you as if he spake for the Church whose claims and virtues he never fails to exalt and glorify. You listen in vain for those wonderful sentences with which Robertson expressed the deepest necessities of our hearts, or exhibited the response which the Eternal makes to our most earnest inquiries. Dr. Liddon but rarely forgets that he is preaching a sermon, while the young Brighton prophet seldom seemed to imagine that he stood anywhere but at your side. Withal, we hold that he is one of the ablest, most earnest, and most eloquent preachers of this generation.

The Rev. W. Morley Punshon, LL.D.

THE Wesleyan Methodist Church has not of late years maintained her former eminence in respect of pulpit excellence of a high order. Not that she has lacked ministers of undoubted ability; but she has had few men of such mark and influence as to have secured considerable mention beyond her own immediate sphere of work and fame. John Wesley did not achieve the success which led to the formation of the body which bears his name by means of what would be called extraordinary eloquence. His preaching was simple, practical, and plain. It had none of the qualities which attracted thousands to listen to his co-worker, Whitfield. The great religious Reformer possessed the might of calm energy, which, more than anything, contributes to lay the foundation of abiding usefulness. Like his Master, he did "not strive nor cry." Methodist preachers have generally been supposed to be marked by extraordinary fervour of feeling and excitement of manner; and many of the famous preachers of the early history of Methodism were distinguished for their zeal and passion. We have heard many who came after those times, but lived near enough to them to have inherited their spirit and style, who were very quiet, calm, impressive preachers—far removed from the ideal which has been shaped to the popular imagination. It is an unkind libel upon the Methodist ministry to affirm that its leading features have been noise and declamation. The "arts of oratory" have been studied with perhaps more care amongst other Nonconformist bodies than by Methodists. But they have had many men whose gift of speech—effective, thrilling, and eloquent speech—rendered them conspicuous among the preachers of the time. Considering the high respect-

ability and wide extension of her Church, Wesleyan Methodism furnishes, in our own period, but few men of remarkable distinction. There are some manifest causes which have done much, perhaps, to bring about this result. While the Methodist preachers exercise their gift as frequently as their brethren in other churches, they preach fewer sermons. It might seem to some people that the opportunity for using one sermon on some six or ten occasions in a year, and then probably retaining it for as frequent repetition in succeeding years, would help towards perfecting these productions far beyond the standard attained by those who have infrequent opportunities for repeating their discourses. There are, however, two evils which are perilous to such a ministry as this. Where few sermons are wanted, all, save the most thoughtful and energetic men, will be content with the preparation of a few; and, by constant repetition, all but the most earnest natures will lose their interest in the sermons which have so much duty allotted to them. It must be remembered that there is always a great distinction to be made between a sermon and a lecture; but even with the lecture, its too frequent repetition must chill the fire of its earlier delivery.

And then, we cannot forbear expressing our opinion that the rigid doctrinal and theological system which obtains in Wesleyan Methodism checks the free and powerful exercise of those qualities of the mind and heart which furnish the true elements of really effective speech. We are sorry to believe that, in this respect, the Methodistic system is far less elastic and expansive than the Roman Catholic. With the acknowledged policy which has ever guided the actions, and the vast store of theological learning which is the rightful boast of the latter Church, her sons have often attained the vivid freshness and glowing splendour which generally accompany originality and independence of mind. It is nearly impossible for a Church whose preachers are required to attach supreme importance to the theological teachings of one man to furnish that type of intellect which must form the basis of real eloquence.

Mr. Punshon may lay claim to unquestionable popular eloquence. He made his first considerable impression upon a London audience by the delivery of a lecture before the Young Men's Christian Association in its famous Tuesday evening course at Exeter Hall some twenty or more years ago, upon the "Prophet of Horeb." A writer, who vividly describes its effect, said that the evening was cold and wet, and altogether of such a nature as would induce most men to remain at home. But all of a sudden he remembered that the lecturer for the evening was a Methodist, and reflected that at any rate he would be warm in listening to him. The lecturer moved Exeter Hall to repeated bursts of enthusiastic applause. Men held their breath in astonishment; ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and reporters, in their admiration, forget to take notes. From that time to this Mr. Punshon has not been altogether lost from the public attention. His absence in Canada, where he filled the office of President of the Conference, did not cool the enthusiasm of his admirers, for immediately after his return to his own land a service was held at City-road Chapel, to which tickets, obtained with great difficulty, alone gave admission; and after an eloquent sermon, more than two thousand pounds were collected. It is fair to affirm that this was, in some sense, a tribute to his acknowledged eloquence.

He lacks utterly those graces of manner which of themselves serve to gain for any speaker a ready attention and interest. Save an eye which has a fiery flash in it that betokens the skill for waking up the enthusiasm of large assemblies, one would not suspect him of being an orator. His voice is often husky and harsh, and possesses none of that mellifluous charm which constitutes so large a power with a great public speaker. It has little music in it, and is an unwilling servant to its master's wishes. There is none of the liquid sweetness and volume of voice which are apparent to all who hear Canon Liddon, nor the resonant fulness and clearness so strikingly characteristic of Mr. Spurgeon.

You are never impressed by the originality of his conceptions of truth, nor charmed with the freshness of

his mode of presenting the old ideas and precious beliefs of men. You are not startled by utterances which like apophthegms cling to the memory, or like the outbursts of intense passion exert their influence upon the heart for years afterwards. There is not even the charm of novelty in the forms which his subjects take; and you are never beguiled with the impression that much learning or inquiry has contributed to impart any advantage to his preaching. You are not lulled to calmness by the quiet force of great power, nor soothed and sweetened by the exquisite tenderness of melodious and pathetic words. He cannot win your affections, nor excite your sentiments, by those irresistible means which many other preachers possess. Nor does he teach you much if you seek in your preacher light and inspiration in regard to the higher aspects of thought, or the deeper forms of life. Nevertheless Mr. Punshon is a great popular preacher.

He has the gift for putting his conceptions of truth and religious history in the poetic form. He has the poet's eye for life and nature, although he has not given evidence of possessing that intense idealism which is a necessary qualification for every poet. So many preachers seem cursed with the unfortunate habit of reducing the living, breathing, beautiful facts and truths of human existence into dull and cheerless prose. They descant on matters of the most sacred and precious kind with far less enthusiasm than a civil engineer would feel in speaking of the iron, wood, or stone which he is skilfully employed in turning to some use. Such men, if they ever idealise anything, leave whatever faculty they possess of this kind behind them when they enter the pulpit. When they speak to their fellow men on themes of everlasting interest they apparently deem it necessary to lay aside whatever of real nature God has bestowed upon them, and to assume an ecclesiastical attitude and style. We have found many who could be vivid and interesting in conversation, and not a few who exhibited traces of positive genius; but who could stand up on Sunday before hundreds of people and utter stale and lifeless platitudes

cast in the ecclesiastical form. Men will listen with eager interest to him who addresses them as though he has looked upon the highest matters with the feeling of one to whom they are really important. Such a preacher will show that he has been interested himself in what he now presents to the attention of his hearers. There is the same difference between him and another man which is often to be observed between one who looks on nature with the insight of feeling, and another who gazes as a sheep might upon a flower.

Mr. Punshon looks at pictures while he preaches, and feels their influence on his heart. Whether it be a Bible scene which rises to the mind, or some apt illustration from the life around us to-day, it is a picture upon which his eye is fixed, and which he aims at enabling his hearers to see as well as himself. He may do it with the rapidity of a sketch, or bestow the pains which a finished painting requires. The painting may at times be a little overdone; and the whole work may hardly seem in keeping with the *physique* of that burly man who is preaching or lecturing; but you must listen to him; and generally, though you may be fastidious, you will be pleased.

The following opening passage, from a sermon on "The Ascension of Our Saviour," illustrates our meaning:—

"Another mountain here invites our climbing—one on whose slopes we have very often lingered, but never before to witness a scene like this. There are some of the consecrated heights which are connected in our memories with only one scene or incident which has had interest about it sufficient to immortalise it. Thus the death of Moses has made Pisgah always sacred, and the successes of Elijah have crowned with a verdurous diadem the brow of Carmel. But there are many passages in the history of the Lord Jesus which consecrate this hill, in itself of no great relative magnitude—only little among the thousands of Judah—into a holy spot for loving eyes and pilgrim feet, and which has made the followers of the Lord in all ages of the world's history dwell with fond and pensive me-

mory upon this Mount—this solemn, strange, Sabbatic Mount of Olives. So many of the events of the Redeemer's incarnate life took place on its slopes, or around its base, that it might almost be called the Mountain of the Lord Jesus. It was His closet, from its clefts He prayed; it was His pulpit, for on its gently-sloping ridge He delivered the Sermon on the Mount; it was the place of His intercourse with His disciples. 'And when they had sung a hymn they went on the Mount of Olives.' Bethany, at its base, was often their common home, where His presence brought its sunshine, and where, in a brief exemption from His own description of His ordinary lot, He found where occasionally to lay His head. Tradition yet shows the spot where the eye of His body beheld the city, and where the eye of His mind, keen in its preternatural insight, gazed upon its future, and saw its stricken people, its burning palaces, and its judicially-blinded sons; wept over the desolation which impended, and would fain, if it had but known, have averted from its coming doom. Underneath, swept by its darkness into greater shadow, lies the garden where His soul underwent one of its deepest baptisms of sorrow; and there, from its crest, He rose, cleaving the upper air in conquering triumph, and in the fulfilment of His completed design. How connected it is with memorials of the Saviour! We don't wonder, therefore, that of all associations, this mountain wakes the tenderest, and of all places of Scriptural interest, this mountain should be most visited by those who loved the Lord; for He prayed, and preached, and taught, and loved, and wept, and agonised, and triumphed, all in connection with the Mount of Olives."

In the same sermon occurs the following glowing passage, which will sustain the opinion which we are expressing of Mr. Punshon's descriptive skill and poetic conceptiveness:—

"We accompany them this morning on that memorable journey, along the city street, through the gateway, down the broken paths, along the bare hillside, to where the Kedron leaps in its bed of sand and pebbles; and

across the brook, nearly dry, perhaps in sympathy with the Saviour's ebbing sorrow. Here we are in the funeral valley of Jehosophat. Ah! do we come hither by that group of memorable olives, with trunks of enormous growth, and with trunks all wildly twisted, whose dark foliage shuts out the sky, and leaves only a settled gloom? Oh! it is fitting, surely, that over this place should hang a dark, deep horror of silence, and it is fitting that a conqueror should pass it on His way to triumph, for here His first sorrow met and overcame Him. This is the garden of Gethsemane. And now climb the hill. Climb the footway, worn through the rocks, sometimes over the verdurous foliage, sometimes upon the parched hillside. Rest here, for the Saviour at this place wept over the fated city of Jerusalem, which lay stretched unconscious before His view. Now, on, through the stony path, through the cornfield, too, which might have furnished illustration for the parable of the sower, for the trodden pathway is in the midst of it; and here and there are huge masses of granite rock, studded with gay but profitless wild flowers—only here and there a patch of fertile and good ground, like an oasis in the desert, till we find ourselves in the village, and among the unpretending houses of Bethany.

"Travellers tell us that although, of course, speculation has been busy all about Jerusalem, although keen controversy is waged as to the probable sites connected with the Redeemer's death and burial, this pathway from Jerusalem to Bethany remains indisputable and intact; and if at any time we can feel now that we have trodden in the very footsteps of Jesus, it is on the road along which we have endeavoured just now to lead you, and on which He led His disciples on that memorable morning. 'He led them out as far as to Bethany.'"

We will quote a passage from his lectures, which bears the same character of vivid picturesqueness of detail and colouring. It is from his lecture on Bunyan, and describes the life of the great man in prison:—

"And now it is nightfall. They have had their evening worship, and, as in another dungeon, 'the prisoners heard them.' The blind child receives the

fatherly benediction; the last 'Good-night' is said to the dear ones, and Bunyan is alone. His pen is in his hand, and his Bible on the table. A solitary lamp dimly relieves the darkness. But there is fire in his eye, and there is passion in his soul. 'He writes as if joy did make him write.' He has felt all the fulness of his story. The pen moves too slowly for the rush of feeling as he graves his own heart upon the page. There is beating over him a storm of inspiration. Great thoughts are striking on his brain, and flushing all his cheek. Cloudy and shapeless in their earliest rise with his mind, they darken into the gigantic, or brighten into the beautiful, until at length he flings them into bold and burning words. Rare visions rise before him. He is in a dungeon no longer. He is in the palace Beautiful, with its sights of renown and songs of melody, with its virgins of comeliness and of discretion, and with its windows opening for the first kiss of the sun. His soul swells beyond the measure of its cell. It is not a rude lamp that glimmers on his table. It is no longer the dark Ouse that rolls its sluggish waters at his feet. His spirit has no sense of bondage; no iron has entered into his soul. Chainless and swift he has soared to the delectable mountains. The light of heaven is around him; the river is the one, clear as crystal, which floweth from the throne of God and of the Lamb; breezes of Paradise blow freshly across it, fanning his temples and stirring his hair; from the summit of the Hill Clear he catches rarer splendours; the New Jerusalem sleeps in its eternal noon; the shining ones are there, each one a crowned harper unto God—this is the land that is afar off, and THAT is the King in His beauty; until, prostrate beneath the insufferable splendour, the dreamer falls upon his knees, and sobs away his agony of gladness in an ecstasy of prayer and praise. Now, think of these things—endearing intercourse with wife and children, the ever-fresh and ever-comforting Bible, the tranquil conscience, the regal imaginings of the mind, the faith which realised them all, and the light of God's approving face shining broad and bright upon the soul—and you will

understand the undying memory which made Bunyan quaintly write, 'I was had home to prison.'"

Such writing serves to bring, as doth a picture, the prisoner of Bedford Gaol before the mind's eye. By help of such a conception we are enabled to see Bunyan sitting in his cell. He lives to our fancy. He comes back from the grave, and we behold the man at his work, as if we entered the old gaol, and sat in his presence.

Mr. Punshon gains great power from the flowing nature of his style. It does not, whenever it attains any marked influence, produce the effect which we generally associate with lame and languid eloquence. You are not permitted to sleep. It is not mellifluous enough to soothe you into a doze; it is now marked by that rasping emphasis, and again charged with such stirring swiftness of expression that one cannot compose one's-self in the corner of the pew to a peaceful nap. You think of a bustling, dashing torrent rushing down a mountain-side, and hardly ever get time or quiet to look into the still depths of a mountain tarn. It is Mr. Punshon's power and weakness, too, that he appears to be too much in a hurry. Robert Hall has always been described as a very rapid speaker; but we judge he was marked by a different kind of rapidity from that which belongs to Mr. Punshon. This man looks in a hurry; his cheeks are flushed with haste; and, while that voice sounds like the gallop of horses in a London fire-engine, those eyes flash as the light of its lamp, borne rapidly through the wild air of a winter's night. At times there is all the rush and sweep of a tornado, which takes everything up in its resistless march. We are oppressed with the prodigality of words. The eloquence is crowded with them. It has, when it charges down upon indifference or folly, the *élan* of the French attack.

All this helps to make an impression upon a popular audience. The orator has them under his spell so long as those swiftly-uttered paragraphs come rushing from his lips. They feel the rush through their own breasts. The breeze of that eloquence blows through them. The dead calm which is too common in a church is broken. You cannot study the hymn-book; listen, at all events,

you must, whether you respond or not to the preacher's testimony. He is not tame, even if he be pronounced wordy. It is not a tide of mere gabble which rolls on before you. A soul is there, and its swift energy is disporting its fancies, or hurling forth as from an intellectual catapult his fierce rebukes of some great sin of men. The velocity of a shower of minie-balls will prove as terrible as the slower processes of cannon-shot. When it is remembered that a large majority of every congregation is composed of the class which is unaccustomed to careful and sustained thought upon any intellectual matter, it can hardly be expected that their attention will be held during the delivery of a sermon of ordinary length upon which the preacher has bestowed less than his best pains. As soon as a dull sentence passes his lips, he will lose a few hearers as completely as though they had left the church; and to re-awaken their attention will require as much energy as if they had to be induced to re-enter the doors. We are not insensible to, nor unthankful for, the custom which has become prevalent in this country for those who pay any kind of outward respect to Christianity to attend some place of worship regularly, and behave with more or less of respect and decorum while they are there. But we could wish, for the advantage of both preacher and hearer, that more preaching had to be done under the conditions of a play, or a popular lecture. Dulness would then be very quickly and curtly rebuked. Due allowance must be claimed for the necessity which is laid upon the preacher to utter unpleasant truths, and to offer unwelcome rebukes.

Dr. Punshon will have been listened to when he was using the following sentences in a sermon upon "Abana and Pharpar." Speaking of the Gospel as containing all the elements of success, he said:—

"There is no difficulty that it cannot overcome; there is no leprosy that it cannot heal; there is no soul out of hell that it cannot reach and save. Success implies opposition, and truly it has had to contend with opposition the most potent and the most forceful. In the first ages of its promulgation, apart from their Divine

authority, its messengers had everything against them. Paganism was then in the consummation of its power. Mythology and philosophy were blent; poetry and science flowed out together in the most attractive and magnificent system which the world had ever known. Each country was its temple. The forum and the senate, the city, the river, and the road, the gymnasium and the sanctuary, teemed with its associations, and yet the truth, the simple truth prevailed, because the Spirit was in it, and that Spirit gave it life. Again, in the first ages of the promulgation of Christianity, the civil power was its most determined antagonist. Princes joined the priesthood and the rabble to shed the blood of Christians. The Cæsars on the throne rallied the armies of the empire to exterminate it from the face of the earth; and yet it lived! Persecution became only the medium of its progress. The lightning which was intended to scathe it only lighted up its beautiful countenance, and, like a lambent flame, played harmlessly about its noble brow. And it is as efficacious now as it has ever been. It has the same energy within itself; it has the same ever-living Spirit to apply it to the human soul. It cares not who comes to its altar—the man rolling in wealth, but who has found in his wealth no refuge, or the poor starveling, to whom the crust is a luxury, and the spring a fountain of the greatest delight. It cares not who comes to its altar—the child whose infant feet have trodden upon the blossoms of some seven springs, or the veteran whose hairs are whitened with the snows of seventy winters. It bids them all a hearty welcome, and it sends them to their houses justified and rejoicing in the Lord."

For all that we have written in commendation of Mr. Punshon's power to arouse and arrest an audience by the flow of an impassioned eloquence, we think he would obtain more power frequently if he were calmer and steadier. He wants, and the hearers want, eloquent pauses and quiet, forcible appeals. Some are likely to go away muttering, "Words! words! words!" They rush in such an impetuous torrent; they foam, and

tumble, and roar. Some men's souls need and look for quieter treatment and calmer appeals. After all, the pulpit is not intended to afford an opportunity for the display of flowing and gorgeous oratory; it supplies the means for getting at men's hearts and consciences, for rousing them to consider the chief good and doing the will of the Most High. There are times when we feel as though eloquence, as men reckon it, were out of place there, and that that man would help us most who had a few plain, honest, gracious, kindly words to speak to us for our good. The rush of an eloquent discourse would be foreign to our tastes and repulsive to our deepest needs. At such times Dr. Punshon has his hardest struggle and difficulty. And we would remind him that they are not infrequent in any church or chapel. It is possible for him to cultivate more simplicity of diction and repose of manner, without taking up those platitudes which, perhaps, it is not after all very remarkable that the pulpit has so largely maintained. We know that he feels the truth of these remarks, for we have the deepest conviction of the reality of his purpose, and the sincerity of his work. He himself said to some young preachers in Canada on one occasion—"Of course, you will not descend to become pulpit buffoons, nor savage polemics, nor ecclesiastical posture-masters, nor small dealers in literary millinery; but according to your cast of mind, you may argue, or expound, or declaim, or depict—and the power may rush through the argument, or lurk in the calm statement of truth, or leap from the eloquent words into the sinner's conscience, or through the picture melt the penitent to tears." This we readily admit; but still claim that the excessive employment of any of these qualifications will mar rather than aid the one great object which every preacher sets before him.

Dr. Punshon is not a declaimer; and he has been of great service to his own branch of the Church in setting an example which her ministers may cherish with great advantage. The careful preparation and literary skill which are always evident in his compositions, reprove the tendency to fervid emphasis and exclamation which has often been too common in the Methodist pulpit.

The Rev. Thomas Jones,

SWANSEA.

The Welsh pride themselves in their preachers. They have good reason for it. Ever since the days that the religious revival of the last century extended its influence to the Principality, there have been preachers within its borders whose eloquence entitles them to rank with the acknowledged celebrities of the United Kingdom. This eminence has, of course, been attained on the simple pathway of plain speech; it has had no connection with those wider and more ambitious efforts which have their basis in profound and varied learning. On the hillside, at their association gatherings, in their large and often ugly chapels,—plain, and, to a great extent, unlettered men have preached the Gospel of the Son of God with a power of pathos and passion which has been remarkable in the history of religious movements during the past century. The fact is suggestive that, far less than in Ireland, this Evangelical fervour has never found a fitting medium for its exercise in the pulpits of the Established Church. We know of very zealous and eloquent Irish clergymen, whose preaching has partaken of the most earnest and ardent qualities who have come to England, and won an honourable and extensive fame, side by side with the most distinguished rivals. It is only necessary to refer to the Bishop of Peterborough and the Dean of Ripon. The life and habits of the Free Churches are manifestly more congruous with the cultivation of a fervent mode of speech, than those of any carefully regulated system like that of the Established Church, where place and power are not under the dominion of the people.

The Welsh are a religious people, and find their enjoyment and satisfaction in religious services. They

have much of the fondness for sensation which marks the French, but they seek its gratification from other sources. The whole country is more or less affected by this religious sentiment. It comes down from generation to generation, and is the heirloom of a people whose fathers were drawn towards religion by the marvellous enthusiasm which roused the simple folk who thronged to the Calvinistic Methodist preachers of bygone days. At the present time you can meet only in Wales with that peculiar exhibition of religious excitement which often followed from the preaching of the early Methodists. Those aspects of religious life which are purely emotional still linger most tenaciously in the land of bardic minstrelsy and romance. We do not deny to the Welsh the possession of intellectual qualities which, if fully trained and cultivated, would procure for them eminence among their English and Scotch fellow-citizens; but Wales is the land of sentiment and song; the country where you may always find the gleaming eye and the tender refrain of beating hearts. We know of an English preacher who, upon going to Wales for the first time in the exercise of his calling, asked for some hints as to his course in dealing with a Welsh audience, from a really learned and excellent Welsh professor. He humorously replied—"Oh, make plenty of noise, and you will do!" It is fair to add that the professor is not a very sentimental man, and that his interest in philosophy is much greater than in poetry. Another Welshman, somewhat gifted in philosophy and poetry, and no mean representative of the national power of song, once remarked in our hearing, as an interested party discussed Welsh tastes and qualities in a pleasant home in South Wales, that many old ministers, living in the hills, remote from the world's highway, and doing a quiet pastoral work, were deeply versed in tough Puritan lore, and meditated in their simple homes the systems of philosophy to which it stood related. He held that in this respect they were abreast of any men of their time. We believe he spoke with not a little national enthusiasm, and probably somewhat over-estimated the acquirements of his countrymen; but Welsh-

men are not deficient in the faculty which would enable them to comprehend the propositions of systematic theology.

Many stories come to us from this country concerning the remarkable gifts, and almost inconceivable eloqence, of many preachers who only preach in the Welsh tongue, or attain their highest flights in that language. Such tales are often told of Rees of Liverpool, and others. It is evident from the sparkling eye which gleams upon you as the tales are told, that a fondness for the mother tongue has not a little to do with the estimate which is put upon the preaching. We imagine there are facilities afforded by the Welsh language for the expression of tender feeling, and delicate but simple sentiment, which render it peculiarly fascinating to those who can understand it. And probably illustrations are used, and words often employed for the expression of such sentiments which have the advantage of that partial privacy, through English ears being unacquainted with it, which makes the preacher feel more at ease and at home. It is like giving way and play to your feelings in the society of near and dear friends, when sentiment breathes freely, and the heart finds ready expression in the first and simplest words which occur. It is like the eloquence of children when outside the best room, unobserved by elders, and warm with emotion, telling some tale of interest to their companions. Then words are not picked; they come at need; the ears on which they fall will not hear critically. The face wears its own appropriate expressions, and gesticulation and action are both artless and beautiful in their way. If you want to witness the most perfect acting, look in upon a group of children huddled round the fire, or gathered on a knoll in the summer afternoon. There you will see and hear what Talma, Kemble, Mathews, and Toole could not surpass. We fancy that these Welsh celebrities, when they speak to the people on certain exciting occasions in their own tongue, feel very much as children at ease with their playmates and schoolfellows. And, so far as preaching concerns the production of corresponding emotions in

other people's minds to those which are in the preacher's own mind, this must attain some of the most signal results. It is not wonderful if, under such exciting influence, the hearers forget the proprieties which govern ordinary congregations, and rise to their feet, laugh and cry, respond audibly to the preacher's appeals, and otherwise express their emotion in unreserved and natural ways. If the preacher be at all equal to the occasion, we conjecture it is seldom necessary to use the complaint of the children in the market-place, of whom our Lord spake.

If we study the tastes of London religious audiences we may form a pretty correct estimate of the feeling which rules on the surface of English society. We are among the number of those who believe that London in no sense represents the actual condition of the English people, either socially, politically, religiously, or intellectually. But that upper sentiment which floats upon the surface of popular feeling does unquestionably obtain very distinct and full expression in the three-million-peopled city. And during a recent period, there has been a great taste in London for Welsh preaching. A few years ago it took a Scotch direction, and a Scotchman with either logic or rhetoric (the Scotchman's stock-in-trade) could make sure of a pulpit somewhere in the wide city. We believe Scotchmen at home have often expressed not a little surprise at the facility with which respectable preachers from the North could attract much popular attention from large and important congregations in the South. There was, it was evident, a chance for a very successful Scotch invasion, and many took advantage of the prevalent taste for their national qualifications. But the tide has turned. They come to us now across the Welsh marches, and the ancient Britons threaten us with conquest. The sons of Cambria have their way in the great metropolis. It is a strong recommendation for a preacher that he comes from the Principality. As soon as he begins to talk of his "native hills," the "mountains of his own dear land," the "tongue in which he lisped his earliest prayers at his mother's knee," the "sweet Welsh songs

he sang in childhood's simpler days," and of many such touching and tender things, there are English hearts which throw open widely their doors to him, and English eyes wet with tears, and English hands ready to grasp his own and welcome him. We believe that large success and usefulness are yet to be attained in the direction of good English preaching, which, mingling enough of logic and emotion together in the simple utterance of a manly English voice, will convey God's truth to the hearts of multitudes with power and feeling.

The Rev. Thomas Jones, of Swansea, has been one of the most honoured and beloved of Welshmen, who has attained the rank of a great living preacher during recent years. Many years ago he came to us from his native land, and preached with some popularity in one or two chapels in the north-west of London. It was in Bedford Chapel, Camden Town, that he first attracted the notice which grew so rapidly that in a very few years he became one of the most famous preachers in London. His first conspicuous effort was a sermon on behalf of the London Missionary Society on the Wednesday evening of the "May-meeting Week" at the Old Tabernacle. It was not long before every prominent pulpit and platform was open to him. He has either taken or been asked to take every important duty which his denomination had to propose to him; and, excited, poetical, natural, passionate speaker as he is, he filled the august chair of the Congregational Union of England and Wales three years ago. It is much to his praise that he delivered his autumnal address from his own pulpit in the town whence he came to London, and whither he returned with honours thick upon him.

We believe it was late in life before Mr. Jones had mastered the primary elements of an English education, and that he underwent much toil and pains before he could express himself with fluency in our tongue. He uses it now very sweetly and effectively—so much so, that we wonder what further gain could be derived from Welsh more than from English. There is abundant evidence of Mr. Jones's untiring energy and persever-

ance—akin to, if not of, the very nature of genius—in the amazing skill which he has acquired in the employment of the most graceful and beautiful forms of our English speech. He must have seen, in those early years of intense struggle, that, if he could once master the tongue of Shakespeare and Burke, he would handle tools which would enable him to do the work of a master with unspeakable satisfaction. It is well known to all Mr. Jones's hearers and admirers that he puts an exalted estimate on the power of speech—that, with him, it is a power which makes swords and engines of war seem poor indeed. When he speaks to preachers, and of preaching, he speaks with the ardour of one who glories in it as by far the greatest work which a man can undertake. Princes, rulers, statesmen, philosophers, even poets, must bend to the man who, in God's name, and at His high command, speaks to his fellows from a pulpit. Who that has heard this good man expatiate on the glories of preaching can fail to recall the glowing passion which fired his words as he dwelt upon his work? He reaches his highest altitudes of passionate eloquence when he pleads for the Divine work of preaching and the Divine Lord of the Church. Then his words have the spell of enchantment, and compel you to submit to his influence.

He pleaded for preaching in the opening sentences of his Congregational Address in the following way:—

"Preaching is the *chief means* ordained by Christ for the conversion of men and the extension of His spiritual kingdom in the world. At the commencement of His own ministry 'He went about all Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom;' and, from that time to the end of His life, He did not cease to teach the people the truths of His religion. He commanded His apostles to go into all the world, and to preach the Gospel to every creature. St. Paul was called to be an apostle, that he might 'preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.' In writing to Timothy, he said:—'Preach the Gospel; be instant in season and out of season.' And in the visions of the Revelation a place is

found for the Christian preacher. The symbol of him is an 'angel flying in the midst of heaven,' dividing the clouds, crossing the path of the thunderstorm, and daring the power of the tempest, that he may preach 'the everlasting Gospel' to them that dwell upon the earth.

"The reason of this appointment is found in the fact that preaching, when rightly done, is the best method of applying the Gospel to the hearts of men. For this purpose a book is not equal in power to the spoken words of the competent preacher; and hence the press can never supersede the pulpit. For mere intellectual teaching, and for giving correct information, books are better adapted than speech; but to arrest the attention of thoughtless men, to awaken the slumbering soul, to create faith where it is not, and to strengthen it where it is, to turn the sinner from the error of his ways, as well as to rouse the dormant energies of the Church, the voice of the inspired preacher will ever be needed."

All this Mr. Jones feels deeply, and, therefore, he often preaches as "one having authority, and not as the scribes." He is possessed with a warm admiration, amounting to reverence, for his own land and its religious traditions. By these he is so strongly possessed that sometimes he soars above his own ordinary height of eloquence, as he recalls the memories of the great times of yore. None who heard him at Swansea, in 1871, can forget the emotion which rained down from the galleries of the chapel, and the mist of feeling which rose from the area, as he touched those tenderest chords of true popular feeling which pass through all we think and feel of home and fatherland. The walls were filled with pictures—the pulpit became a stage. The drama of Welsh life and history was played out before us. The Welsh sobbed in recollection of the days that are no more, and the English hearers caught the feeling, and sent up a heart-bursting cheer in response to the touching, thrilling words of the preacher.

"We can look back with thankfulness upon the religious history of this Principality during the last sixty or eighty years. God raised up eminent ministers of religion—strong men in mind and body, massive and

poetic also, as 'the everlasting hills' amid which they were born. Their faith was a kind of spiritual vision, and their preaching was a description of what they *saw*. . . . Voices they had that sounded like pathetic, wandering notes from the ages of inspiration. 'Bound in spirit,' constrained by the life of faith and love that was in them, they 'went everywhere preaching the Gospel.' No place escaped their notice. They preached in every town, village, and hamlet; on the hill-top, in the deep valley, and in the wild places of the mountains, where only the shepherds lived, their voices were heard. Their way of preaching was this: First they declared the law—stormed from Sinai. Then they sounded forth the Gospel melody from Calvary. Like nature, lightning and thunder, followed by a genial shower, which makes the earth green. Their passion for the spread of the Gospel, and the salvation of their countrymen from ignorance and sin, lasted as long as their life. It was not a noisy brook bubbling among the rocks, flooded to-day and to-morrow dry, but a deep, calm, wide river, ever flowing according to a Divine law. . . . The nation responded to their call, and the land was filled with the knowledge and spirit of religion. They have departed, but their influence remains, and their names are dear to the people they have served so well. Their spirits are at home with God; their dust rests in their native valleys; and if we can prevent it, no cruel storm shall wither the flowers that grow upon their graves."

Their spell is upon their descendant. He revels in the memories of the good and strong who once lived and worked in his beloved country. Their zeal works within his own breast, and he yearns to kindle in others the fires that these men once lighted in the hearts of their hearers.

There is in Mr. Jones's manner and spirit a quality which is peculiarly Welsh. If our readers have ever heard genuine Welsh music, they will have observed that it is full of plaintive sweetness and wailing tenderness. There is something in it which seems as if it came from hearts that stood gazing often from the

edges of those awful precipices which overhang the deep, unfathomable gulfs of Being. Its very gladness partakes of the joy which has risen triumphant over sorrow, but moves anxiously along through the dim vales, and up the solemn hills of life, with the fear that soon again the warfare may begin, and the darkness fall around. Their own native songs are as plaintive as if men and women sung them while they wept; and now and again you catch a sweet, soft wail, as "sweet and low," as if suffering but hopeful children echoed-on a touching refrain. It is the music of pilgrims—the melody of hearts that are bound towards a higher land of light and rest, which is far away, but ever coming nearer. Those who have ever heard a large congregation of Welsh people sing some of their sweetly-tender hymns, will remember what sad melody there was in the strains; and how they sang as those who "here have no continuing city, but seek one to come." A Welsh minister was once visiting Germany, and chanced to be in a German city at a time when a great musical festival was being held. Coming into contact with one of the most eminent German composers, the minister, who had himself a passionate sentiment for music, and withal a pleasant and facile voice, sang some well-known melodies which had long floated amongst his native hills. The great composer was charmed with their exquisite sweetness, and pronounced them to be remarkable and beautiful beyond what he had suspected to be possible from a people of such simple ways, and so far removed from cultured musical taste.

Mr. Jones's preaching resembles Welsh music. It has the same tenderness, softness, sweetness, and charm. He does not possess a voice which will bear a moment's comparison with thousands of pulpit voices in our time; but he has such mastery over it, and so tender a heart and delicate a fancy stand behind the voice, that he can soften, modulate, and control it, so as to express all moods and variations of feeling. Even as the competent musician will bring sweet music somehow from an imperfect instrument, so, with his weak, and seemingly inadequate voice, he will draw forth musical speech

to which men will be glad to listen. There is something not altogether unlike a pleasure in hearing him when the words, as it were, wait behind his teeth, and then find expression by a peculiar process of sibilation. In some of its higher notes there is a painfully exquisite power of fascination. We begin to think of "pathetic wandering notes from the ages of inspiration." There, before you, stands a spare, fragile, narrow-chested man, who possesses and uses powers which control you as if he were singing a sweet song. The song passes through many varieties of style and character. Now, it utters quietly its feeling—then it bursts into a passionate lament, or soars for a moment into joyous hope; again, it softly pleads its burden, and gives forth sweetly a soft refrain. It is like a *fugue*.

> "The volant touch,
> Instinct through all proportions low and high,
> Flies and pursues transverse the resonant fugue."

You wonder whither, in time, you will be taken; and to what height of feeling you will be required to ascend.

That keen glance burns as with fire. It glimmers as the light in the tower which tells the mariner his course in the night time. It changes colour, and flashes with such splendour that you are conscious of the spell it throws over you. If it be lighted up with passion you are almost affrighted; if it kindle with love you are melted. Those eyebrows beetle over the fiery glances as the pine-covered crags above some lighted village in the hills. You think of Elijah talking to Ahab and Jezebel, or proudly exulting on the heights of Carmel; or of the great Baptist on the banks of the Jordan, warning the people of their sins. But this same voice can be tender and gentle as that of John the disciple, when it told the love of Jesus Christ to the inhabitants of Ephesus.

His action has the grace of a finished dramatist. It is easy, simple, suitable. He holds his head erect, and waves his hand, or places it on the side of the pulpit with the self-possession of a man who is conscious of the manly nature of the work he has to do. There is nothing to repel, but much to attract and impress in

his whole attitude. When that head rises, as it often does, quickly and vigorously, and that voice swells into earnestness, you go along with him, drawn on by an irresistible power. The man before you has the gift, the art of addressing men. He knows how they must be approached and affected; how they must be stirred and roused; instructed, and interested in the truth. That erect head, that penetrating gaze, that impressive manner cannot fail to win its object. It must not be supposed that we imagine Mr. Jones to study the arts of a dramatist, but granted a speaker on sacred things possess that one pre-requisite for his work,—spiritual conviction,—we do not see that he is to avoid acquainting himself with whatever may tend to improve his faculties, develop his skill, and increase his influence over those whom he addresses. There is no reason why a preacher, any more than another public speaker, should not be cured, or cure himself, of any unpleasant habit which will prejudice his hearers against him. So far as we know, whatever contributes to the advantage of a speaker who, from any platform, labours to really instruct and persuade men, must be of equal service to a preacher of the Gospel. It may all be perfectly natural to Mr. Jones; if it have been acquired by study and care, or even training, it is still to be valued.

He sometimes uses an apostrophe with very remarkable effect. We know of no man who has a tithe of his power in this respect. It comes from him with unaffected grace, and therefore remarkable effect. There is nothing stilted or laboured about it. In all Mr. Jones's best speaking there is a very close approximation to the accuracy and perfection of a manuscript, combined with all the ease and grace of an impromptu and very artless inspiration. He breaks out into some address to an inanimate symbol, as to the "old pulpit" at the Tabernacle,—or to the Divine Being, with so much facility and force, that you would think he had but then thought of it. None will forget the impression which was made by the closing words of his first Congregational Address. He had spoken of the great power which Christ had won in the heart of man

and in human society in strains worthy of the glowing eloquence of Robert Hall. He concluded, it will be remembered, with the following passage—"GREAT NAME! DIVINE NAME! DEAR NAME! Jesus Christ our Saviour! Preach it; for it is the Life of the Church, the Light of the World, and the Hope of Humanity. Preach it; for it is the 'Hiding-place' prepared for us, and here the soul is safe from every coming storm. Preach it with confidence and reverent boldness; for the ancient charm—the old attractive power—is in it still. The woman who stood behind Him in the House of Simon the Pharisee, and 'washed His feet with tears,' did a symbolical act. From age to age repenting souls gather round His footstool; they come to weep there, and His feet are ever wet with penitential tears. As it was in the past, and is now, it shall be in the future. 'His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.'"

Many readers will observe that in the preparation of this passage Mr. Jones must have had a well-known hymn in mind. It must be evident to those who listen to him attentively, and have a tolerable acquaintance with the poetry of the time, that he frequently recalls and "works up" into his sermons and addresses some of its most striking passages. He does not merely transpose, but skilfully and earnestly reproduces the impression which it leaves upon his own heart. He has a poetic nature; his soul responds to all the poetic voices which reach him. It is hardly to be supposed that an Independent preacher, who has to prepare usually two sermons a week for a congregation which has come to look for great things from him, can *create* very much new imagery and illustration and thought. Few men are more productive and versatile than Mr. Ward Beecher; and, in his own way, the late Mr. Lynch was singularly successful in this respect. But no preacher in the ordinary run of his sermons can accomplish what the poet does who bestows upon a few lines the thought and care of weeks. Mr. Jones may not have quite *intensity* enough

for the production of immortal poetry, but he has all the requisites which fit him for appreciating the sweet and wondrous ways of the Divine Muse. As Mr. Carlyle has remarked, "The next thing to being a great poet is to be able to read a great poet." This Mr. Jones can do with effect—that is, he can read it to his own heart, so as to receive its meaning and feel its beauty and power.

Side by side with this quality, which serves his great work so completely, he has a vivid sense of the powerful and subtle forces which have ruled the world. We once heard him express his deep comprehension of the mysterious and awful power of the Papacy. His soul was so much stirred and affected by what he felt, that he half-convinced us of the glory of that mighty system, and well-nigh compelled us to concede to it a higher position than we knew to be its due. He can read history as well as poetry. Who, indeed, are the best historians? Are not the poets? Who has interpreted some of the prominent characters and events in English history so well as Shakespeare? What man has ever expounded the significance of the great times of our national history but those who have had a vivid poetic conception of their meaning? And so Mr. Jones reads the page of history with a poet's vision; and what he says about it helps us to feel that God has lived and had His Being in our nation as well as in old Judea. Dr. Dryasdust and Mr. Jones would not have a very exciting intercourse. But now and then the poetical preachers might receive something from the droning doctor which would take the same place in their work which the block quarried by the rough labourer does to the finished work of art.

Most of the observations we have offered on Mr. Jones's preaching may leave the impression upon the minds of the reader that his success is mainly to be attributed to his manner, style, and way of preaching, rather than to the solid value of what he says. We would rather explain our feeling to be that while what Mr. Jones says is of real value, his manner of saying it is indispensable to impart to it the singular power which it obtains over the mind and heart of the hearer. May

we not claim that that is very poor preaching which loses but little when the sermon is read at home, save as the hearer becomes the reader, and, by the help of a quick and retentive fancy, can reproduce the effect of the spoken discourse? It may fairly be said that Mr. Jones, more than most preachers, sustains a very great loss when he is read and not heard. Take into your hands a dull, lettered page, and keep out of sight and hearing the *man*, with his elevated brow, his flashing eye, his erect form, his wailing, tender voice, his passion and his pathos, you can form no conception by the help of the former of what the latter really is. Mr. Jones will live in the future, as men hand on to the coming time the memories of the great preachers that now wave the sceptral wand over the hearts of multitudes. He will have no prominent place on the shelves of coming generations of readers. One remarkably beautiful passage from the May Address will serve to illustrate the exquisite power of the preacher in its very best form, and to show his conception of a preacher's work:—

"I have heard on a calm summer's evening the sweet tones of a human voice brought to my ears from the farther side of a deep valley. The day was over and gone; night, with its gloom and sadness, had fallen upon the land; and not a sound was heard, save the murmur of the river and that solitary voice singing some native air, well known there among the mountains for generations past. The voice wandered over the hills, lingered in the caves of the rocks, trembled among the tree branches, and filled the night air with its soft, pathetic notes. It was a sigh breaking into a song; and it created in the mind of the listener longings that cannot be well put into words—longings for the years that had been, and for the friends, companions, and fathers who were gone; longings also for the perfect good, the state in which all discord has ceased, and life is restful, harmonious, and eternal. Our preaching ought to resemble that voice, and should come upon the people burdened with love, subdued with tenderness, saturated with the genius of the Gospel—a 'sweet, lyric song,' having power to call forth their best aspirations, to inspire longings for 'the things which are not seen,'

to wean their hearts from the 'vain show' in which so many live, and to fix their minds upon Christ, and God, and heaven."

His own preaching is thus very fitly and beautifully described. It is a "sweet lyric song," a "sigh breaking into a song." We cannot but be jealous of its seeming loss in the remote though populous Welsh town to which he returned after a successful ministry in London. But such a nature as his can hardly bear the strain of a long metropolitan pastorate. It seems necessary that such a frail physical structure should acquire strength in its own land; and that those eyes, wearied with the look of the long streets and formal squares of London, should refresh themselves with frequent daily glimpses of the hills and sea he loves so well. He has hardly the resistance capable of bearing the push and rush of the wonderful City. Its teeming thousands are too many for him. The voice is too much like one crying in the wilderness. It might have ceased its wailings altogether had he not gone back to Swansea. There are but few preachers who are more welcome to its largest churches, few voices which have a fresher fount of inspiration. Whenever that "sweet lyric song" is sung in London the people will hear it gladly. And the more so because he is not tainted with that pious horror of free thought and hearty feeling which stifles all true life. The man who preached often before Robert Browning at Bedford Chapel, and admired and honoured the poet, as we know he did, could hardly fail to catch the best tendencies of our time. In his own words, "the formality which stifles all enthusiasm; the religious conservatism which is afraid of its own shadow; the narrow orthodoxy in the atmosphere of which the free spirit of religion gasps for breath; and the heresy-hunting which sometimes rises almost to the dignity of a learned profession in England," have no charm for him. No poetic soul can be bound in fetters and live. Thomas Jones utters forth from an earnest heart the loving message which the Blessed One first dropped upon the ears of peasants in the days when He manifested the Father's glory, "full of grace and truth."

The Rev. James Martineau.

If we needed justification for including Mr. Martineau in our list of Great Modern Preachers it would be sufficient to refer to the wide acceptance which has been given to the volume of his sermons, published under the title of "Endeavours after the Christian Life." It is more than thirty years ago since the first set of these discourses appeared, followed three or four years later by the second. They have been welcomed by every section of the Christian Church, and almost unstinted praise has been bestowed upon them by all who have made their acquaintance. The minister of a large congregation of orthodox Nonconformists once told us that he was asked by one of his hearers for direction in a matter which occasioned him some difficulty. A gentleman, bearing a name known far beyond the limits of his own denomination, had been requested to take his turn with other laymen in sustaining simple Sunday evening services at a mission-room; and possessing but little gift for free speech, desired to read some suitable discourses to the people, which he felt would be more appreciated than his own disjointed and incoherent utterances. He asked his minister what sermons would be best for the purpose. The minister put "Endeavours after the Christian Life" into his hand.

In the preface to the second volume Mr. Martineau observes—"It would be ungrateful were I not to acknowledge, as one of the results of the former volume of this work, the delightful and unsought-for intercourse it has opened to me with persons, whom it is an honour to know, of various religious denominations. In the divided state of English society, a work which touches any springs of religious affection common to several classes, performs at least a seasonable, though very

simple, and natural office." We do not select Mr. Martineau for criticism in this series, because of the colourless nature of his faith; with that we have really nothing now to do. It may be as well to affirm our belief that he is a decided Unitarian, although the place which Jesus Christ takes in his theology is a far higher one than that which would be assigned by many who bear the name of Unitarian. Mr. Martineau can expound and defend the principles of his denomination with much fervour and energy; and he is bound by family ties and traditions, as well as by strong personal interest, to that branch of the Christian Church.

We do not deny that his influence over a large number of minds has in part been due to the way in which he deals, in the excellent volume to which we have referred, with those "springs of religious affection which are common to several classes." Sorrow is the same thing, whether it falls upon the homes and hearts of Baptists or Unitarians, and conscience is not materially different in the breasts of Churchmen or Dissenters. Sin, sorrow, suffering, repentance, hope, victory, in their spiritual significations and deepest meanings, are not regulated altogether by men's creeds and formulas. Mr. Martineau would not have attempted to palm off his discourses by means of an ingenious reserve upon orthodox Christians; but he really succeeded in producing two volumes, which, if they had been issued anonymously, could not have been detected as the utterance of a Unitarian pulpit. These admirable sermons suffice to show that the great faiths of men are in many respects marvellously alike.

Mr. Martineau set an example which it would have been well for many, even distinguished men, to have followed. As he said, "I have preserved what I have to say in its original form of discourses prepared for the pulpit. I have always felt indignant with those preachers who, when they resort to the press, seem ashamed of their vocation, and disguise under new shapes and names the materials originally embodied in sermons. I should as soon think of turning a sonnet into an epistle, a ballad into a review, or a dirge into

an obituary. It must be a bad sermon that can be made into a good treatise, or even a good 'oration.'"

And immediately after these words Mr. Martineau gives us his own impressions of what sermons are, or should be. It is important that we should mark this well, that we may have the exact key for the clear understanding of the spirit and manner of his own discourses. "In virtue of the close affinity, perhaps ultimate identity, of religion and poetry, preaching is essentially a lyric expression of the soul, an utterance of meditation in sorrow, hope, love, and joy, from a representative of the human heart in its divine relations. In proportion as we quit this view, and prominently introduce the idea of a perceptive and monitory function, we retreat from the true prophetic interpretation of the office into the old *sacerdotal*—or, what is not perhaps so different a distinction as it may appear, from the properly *religious* to the simply *moral*. A ministry of mere instruction and persuasion, which addresses itself primarily to the understanding and the will, which deals mainly with facts and reasonings, with hopes and fears, may furnish us with the expositions of the lecture-room, the commandments of the altar, the casuistry of the confessional; but it falls short of that true 'testimony of God,' that personal effusion of conscience and affection, which distinguishes the reformed *preaching* from the catholic *homily*." Mr. Martineau pushes too far a view which has much to be said in its favour. The one should and may be done, without leaving the other undone. The greatest and completest of preachers will mingle his devoutest and deepest of meditations with instruction and exhortation. Preaching affords an opportunity for addressing men in respect to religious and moral concerns; and the object of all sermons should be to help and move them in regard to such matters. Raffaelle has well depicted the true attitude of the Christian preacher in his cartoon of Paul at Athens. The greatest of preachers stands with uplifted hands delivering his earnest message to the idolaters of the proud Grecian city, and making his loving appeal to them for their eternal good. Men

must be pleaded with and persuaded. They are open to pleas and persuasions on all other subjects; why not on this, the greatest of all? It would but serve an inadequate and unsatisfying object if all preachers were simply to offer their best meditations to their hearers. The man who in his sermons never adopts the second personal pronoun, but always remains in the third, has hardly the example of any really great preacher to sustain his practice. Prophets and Apostles, the preachers of the middle ages, the Reformation, and the men who have moved society in later times, have always sought to rouse and impel their hearers, as well as to refresh and comfort them by means of holy meditation. And they have done this in many cases with the greatest effect under the inspiration of the circumstances which gathered about them as they uttered the words which they deemed important for their hearers' good.

Mr. Martineau believed, in 1847, that, if this distinction were duly apprehended, there would be less demand for extemporaneous preaching. Such sermons as he considered genuine were the natives of solitude. Fluent speech would find its proper mission, and its wise influence to various "civic and moral ends;" but if it ever, in his estimation, gained a sway from the pulpit, a change would be produced which the devout genius of England would have cause to deplore; and the compositions of Taylor, Barrow, Leighton, and Butler would find no rivals in their region of sacred literature from the productions of this degenerate age.

It would almost be enough to remark that the sermons of Bishop Butler would probably have had as much value if they had never been preached, but simply left to take their rightfully exalted place in the literature of the country. And a sermon, we hold, is not in any high sense a "genuine sermon" which is not great as heard rather than read. It may be a profound or beautiful meditation of a pure and fervent spirit; but it is not a sermon, except it has fallen upon men's ears with a more impressive interest than it could ever secure when read. For the general purposes of

preaching, such sermons as those of Mr. Collyer, of Chicago, a well-known American Unitarian minister, are likely to be of greater value than more careful compositions of the meditative sort. They are fresh and vigorous, and possess that exquisite play of feeling which is so important an element of effective preaching.

But Mr. Martineau's sermons are better than his own declared principles of sermon composition. They would not meet the needs of a very large number of sermon-hearers, but in their own way they are as perfect as sermons have ever been. The themes about which the preacher is concerned are such as must sooner or later claim the attention of all of us. They are not merely such as would charm the quiet moments of a philosopher's life and lead him onward to those subjects of contemplation for which the philosophic habit could alone fit him. They affect us all as human beings, and require but a human heart to derive benefit from their consideration. They are not cold lucubrations upon subjects in which a fervent and simple discourse would suffice to excite our interest; they glow with the warm imagination of a nature which can look at nothing but through the poetic vision. Their pathos is so manifest in every page that no reader can help thinking of that as a primal quality of the sermons. None who have heard Mr. Martineau preach will fail to recall some passages in which this was prominently revealed. And with what quiet, graceful allusions he expresses the deep feeling of his heart! In that calm, and, as we think, beautiful face, it is not difficult to find traces of deep emotion. You do not catch the half-concealed humour, and fitness for dextrous discussion if occasion arose, which were apparent to careful observers of the never-to-be-forgotten face of Mr. Maurice; but you have a pensive calmness, and a patient hopefulness, which always connect every loving thought of Mr. Martineau with the life that is beyond this. We saw him weeping like a child over the open grave of the illustrious teacher and theologian, as the sweet strains of "Abide with me" were being sung that peaceful April noon, beneath the budding trees in the corner of

Highgate Cemetery. Brother was weeping for brother. They had been cradled in the same faith, and their early associations must have been in some respects identical. Their public paths had been dissimilar, but they were never far off in sentiment and life.

Before we quote some passages from the sermons in justification of the praise we have written, something must be said in respect of the matchless beauty of their style. It is fair to affirm that as specimens of the most perfect and charming English composition, they deserve to rank with the accepted standards of our classical literature. We meet with the felicitous grace of Addison, the dignity of Burke, and the splendour of Johnson, without the strained effect, exaggerated display, and sonorous magniloquence which may offend us as we turn over the pages of these great writers of our English language. Mr. Martineau was familiar from his childhood with men who knew how to express their best thoughts in language worthy of being listened to or read by the foremost people of the time. We confess to the helpful and soothing influences which invariably steal over us when this volume is in our hands. It has many of the qualities of natural phenomena in it. You can feel as though you heard a calm and peaceful stream gliding along through sweet-breathed meadows in the long summer hours; you look upward to the great blue sky, and feel the trembling light of a myriad stars falling upon you; or you gaze across the wide blue sea, and look out to the dim distance where sky and waters meet as if they hid the shores of heaven from view.

It is such a relief to escape from a style to which brusque and vulgar contributors to sensational journals are continually helping us; to be spoken to on highest matters by one who voices our truest and deepest sentiments in words which the most perfect masters of the English language could not have chosen with greater felicity, or wielded with a more adequate power. You never feel that the preacher laboured to be effective, much less to be pretty. There is nothing of the *studentesque* or early-florid quality in the style. The words are apparently the only ones in which the

thoughts could live. Speech and thought are wedded after the fashion of a spiritual and indissoluble affinity. You believe that the preacher "sought out acceptable words" as divinely bound to do; but he did not do it in the way in which a mere trickster with words might try to gain effects as with bits of coloured glass in a kaleidoscope. Words with this writer are nothing but as they stand for thoughts and feelings which are of infinite value. They do not find their places in his pages through the mysterious processes of any shuffling tricks. They come at the bidding of a master, who uses them as his servants to carry out the high purposes which all his speech has in view.

With what perfect power and grandeur of feeling does he affirm and claim, in the following fine passages, the true dignity and divinity of sorrow. There is passion mingled with pathos, the rush of a heart on fire, subdued only by the fast-falling rain of tears—subdued, not quenched.

We will link together a few passages, which may also partly serve to exhibit the course of the argument.

"Religious professors have put their own congenial interpretation on the morality of Christ; and being themselves—but too frequently—unfeeling and unsocial mystics, they have multiplied the penances of natural emotion, and sublimed from the Gospel its pure humanities.

"The present, though the intensest, point of existence is to be comparatively unfelt, and the past, whereof the restrospect is sweet and solemn to the travelled pilgrim, the history of childhood and its unforgotten friendships, of youth and its unchecked aspirations, of maturity with its worn yet deeper love, its more crushing yet worthier anxieties, its purer but more melancholy wisdom—all this because it is human and not Divine, of earth and not of heaven, is to be refused the tribute of a sigh. For my own part, regarding our human nature as the image of its Divine parent, and in nothing more truly that image than in the impulses of its disinterested love, I bend in reverence before the emotions of every melted heart.

"Those who blame as unchristian the deep grief which bereavement awakens must extend their disapprobation much further, and censure all strong human attachments.

"Grief is only the *memory* of widowed affection, and nothing but a draft of utter oblivion could lap it in insensibility. When the ties of strong and refined attachment have long bound us to a home, when the sympathies of those who share with us that home have become as the needful light of our daily toil, and the guardian spirits of our nightly rest; when years have passed on, and brought us many a sickness banished by their fidelity, many a danger averted by their counsels, many an anxiety rendered tolerable by their participation; when often they, too, have gazed on us from the bed of pain, and threatened to depart, but we have been permitted to rescue them from the grave, and therein have doubled all our tenderness; when, from this close inspection of pure hearts, we have learned to think nobly of human nature, and hopefully of the providence of God; when their voices, common enough to other ears, but fraught to us with unnumbered memories of life, have become the natural music of the earth—can this melody be silent, can these virtues depart, can these remembrances be deprived of their living centre, without leaving us trembling and desolate? Can all these fibres of our life be wrenched, and not bleed at every pore?"

He repels with eloquent scorn—the more withering because of its polished and perfect expression—the charge which is often unjustly preferred against sorrow for the dead—that it is *selfish*. That seemingly calm and profound nature wakes up into the grandeur of earnest indignation, and then, when the storm has done its work of scathing reproof, it falls into its accustomed and cherished mood of sweet and tender meditation.

"Selfish! What, that pure affection bowed and broken to the earth! yearning only to discharge again, were it possible, but the humblest service of love! What would it not do, what sacrifice of self would it not make, what toils, what watching, would it not hold

light, might it be permitted to perform one office for the departed!—unseen, unfelt, unheard, without the hope of a requiting smile, to shed on that spirit one silent blessing! Surely this insult to human grief must be the invention of cold hearts, needing a justification for their own insensibility. True it is there is no need to mourn for those who are removed. True it is we weep not for them, but for ourselves and for our children. It is we only that suffer and are sad. But emotions are not selfish simply because they are experienced by ourselves. Were it so, every joy and sorrow would be branded by that odious name. They are selfish only when they are full of the idea of self—when self is their object as well as their subject; when they tempt us to prefer our own personal and exclusive happiness to that of others, and to trample on a brother's feelings, in the chase after our own good. Of this there is nothing in the tears of bereavement—they are the tribute not of our self-regarding, but of our sympathetic nature. At last, indeed, when the burst of grief has had its natural way, they lead us to a generous joy. For as we weep, we think how blessed are the departed, who 'rest from their labours, while their works do follow them;' their pure hearts jarred no more by the harshnesses of this oft discordant life; their earnest minds drinking of the perennial fount of truth; their frailties cast away with the coil of mortality they have left behind; their sainted love waiting to receive us, as we too may one by one pass the dark limits which sever us from their embrace, and seek with them the peace and progress of the skies."

Mr. Martineau has read carefully and deeply the secrets of our human heart. He knows its weaknesses and temptations, its failures and its sorrows. To him sin is an ever-present and actual trouble which spoils and ruins men to-day; to be understood by an acquaintance with the commonest human hearts which beat around us; to be read by every thoughtful mind that will ponder over its conflicts with goodness, and its terrible inflictions upon the lives that submit to its sway. It might be interesting to be informed as to its

early dealings with the ancestors of our race, but it is of very much more consequence to know what are its operations and effects at this passing hour. It is a matter of every-day as well as remote history.

In a sermon upon the rich young man, entitled, "The Sorrow with Downward Look," he thus wrote: "He who will persistently follow his own highest impulses and convictions, who will trust only these amid noisier claims, and constrain himself to go with them alike in their faintness and their might, shall not find his struggle everlasting; his wrestlings shall become fewer and less terrible; the hand of God, so dim to him and doubtful at the first, shall in the end be the only thing that is clear and sure; his best shall be his strongest too. But this, which is a holy peace, is not the only rest open to the contradictions of our nature. There is also an escape from discord by an inverse and descending path. And if a man will steadily follow his strongest impulses, without regard to their vileness or their worth, will give no heed to any whispering compunction, will do only and always what he likes; from him, too, the jarring and conflict of nature shall pass away; God's Spirit will not always strive with him to turn his wilful steps; the angels that beset his path with entreaty, with protest, with defiance, will thin off till they are seen no more; he will enjoy a cheerful and comfortable exemption from anything Divine; and, by withdrawal of all else, his strongest affections will become his best. . . . If a man resolves to disown the upper region of his nature, he may find entertainment, if that be all, in the lower; and care may be made to fly before the gas-lamps and merriment of the vault, as well as beneath the starlight of the observatory, and the silence of the skies. The difference is not sentient, but moral, between the harmonies of the world above, and the enchantment of Circe's isle—the one a music straying from the gate of heaven, and waking the soul to share the vigils of immortals; the other composing it to sleep upon the verge of hell."

With what sublime and inspiring eloquence he expatiates upon the enlargement which Christianity has given to the scale of human life in his sermon upon "The Chris-

tian Time-view." This quotation will satisfy us that Mr. Martineau is capable of the most glowing forms of sacred eloquence. There is the same mingling of passion and pathos to which we have made reference above.

"The difference between the ancient and modern world is this—that in the one the great reality of being was *now;* in the other it is *yet to come.* If you would witness a scene characteristic of the popular life of old, you must go to the amphitheatre of Rome, mingle with its 60,000 specators, and watch the eager faces of senators and people. Observe how the masters of the world spend the wealth of conquest, and indulge the pride of power! See every wild creature that God has made to dwell, from the jungles of India to the mountains of Wales, from the forests of Germany to the deserts of Nubia, brought hither to be hunted down in artificial groves by thousands in an hour. Behold the captives of war, noble perhaps, and wise in their own land, turned loose amid yells of insult, more terrible for their foreign tongue, to contend with brutal gladiators, trained to make death the favourite amusement, and present the most solemn of individual realities as a wholesale public sport! Mark the light look with which the multitude, by uplifted finger, demands that the wounded combatant be slain before their eyes! Notice the troop of Christian martyrs awaiting, hand-in-hand, the leap from the tiger's den! And when the day's spectacle is over, and the blood of two thousand victims stains the ring, follow the giddy crowd as it streams from the vomitories into the street. Trace its lazy course and hear it there scrambling for the bread of private indolence doled out by the purse of public corruption, and see how it suns itself to sleep in the open ways, or crawls into foul dens, till morning brings the hope of games and merry blood again—and you have an idea of the Imperial people, and their passionate living for the moment, which the Gospel found in the occupation of the world. And if you would fix in your thought an image of the popular mind of Christendom, I know not that you could do better than go at sunrise with the throng of toiling men to the hill-side, where Whitfield or Wesley is about to preach. Hear what a great burst

of reality in that hymn that swells upon the morning air —a prophetic strain upon a people's lips! See the rugged hands of labour, clasped and trembling, wrestling with the Unseen in prayer! Observe the uplifted faces, deep-lined with hardship and with guilt, streaming now with honest tears, and flushed with earnest shame, as the man of God awakes the life within, and tells of Him that bare for us the stripe and cross, and offers the holiest spirit to the humblest lot, and tears away the veil of sense from the awful gates of heaven and hell. Go to these people's homes, and observe the decent tastes, the sense of domestic obligations, the care for childhood, the desire of instruction, the neighbourly kindness, the conscientious self-respect, and say whether the sacred image of duty does not live within those minds; whether *holiness* has not taken the place of *pleasure* in their idea of life; whether for them, too, the toils of nature are not lightened by some eternal hope, and their burthen carried by some angel of love, and the strife of necessity turned into the service of God. The present tyrannises over their character no more, subdued by a future infinitely great; and hardly though they live upon the rock of this world, they can live the life of faith; and while the hand plies the tools of earth, keep a spirit open to the skies."

There is something really terrible in the way in which Mr. Martineau depicts the punishment which sin brings on character. It is the more awful in its impressiveness because the preacher never allows himself to lose that perfect control over his pen which enables him to carefully express the calm and solemn convictions of his heart. When such men take up such themes, there is a certainty that they will be marked by force and impressiveness. What awful and abiding power there is in the following passage, which occurs at the close of the sermon upon "The Rich Young Man"—

"Those who are haunted by no visions of higher good, who see only what the sun or moon may shine upon, on whom no lifted veil shuts in the splendours so kindling to the nobler reason, so fatal to the feebler will, escape the sighs of bitterest regret. Whoso is placed of God upon the loftiest heights is on the verge

of the most enshadowed chasms. The revelations of thought and conscience are awful privileges, vainly coveted by profane ambition, and even to the devout and wise safe only when received with pure self-renunciation. The richest lights that fall upon the soul lie next to the deepest tones of shade. Messiah's first gaze of Divine affection on the half-earnest youth would, doubtless, send through his heart a hopeful joy; but afterwards, when he had lapsed into the old and common self, that very glance would become a terrible remembrance. And so is it with us all. Every light of moral beauty permitted to enter, but not allowed to guide us, becomes like the after-image of the sun when idly stared at, a dark speck upon the soul, which follows us at all our work, adheres to every object, approaches and recedes in dreams, and is neither evaded by movement nor washed out by tears."

Such a treatment of spiritual subjects will procure for any preacher earnest and thoughtful attention, and insure the gratitude and regard of his hearers. His influence over them will bear but a slight relation to the dogmas which either he or they accept, but will have its secret springs of power in his aptness to deal with the ever-abiding matters which concern us here and hereafter. His weekly ministrations will have their source of power in the devout and solemn hold which his own heart has upon the life which is divine and eternal; eternal because it is divine. The tones of his voice will be as music to their ears, alluring them from the low mean cares and bitter regrets of life to a region of humble trust in a love which never fails. It reveals the sympathy of God while it discovers the sinfulness of men. It probes the wounds of human nature, and brings the balm of consolation and the restoring inspiration of hope to impart life and vigour to the heart.

John Henry Newman, D.D.,

FORMERLY VICAR OF ST. MARY'S, OXFORD, AND FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE.

No list of great modern preachers would be complete from which should be omitted the name of Dr. Newman. No such results have flowed from the preaching of any man in our time as for many years were connected with his ministry in Oxford. To him more than any was owing the extraordinary revival which roused the University forty years ago, and which therefrom affected the religious life and worship of the whole nation. Whatever of spirit and earnestness may be displayed by the Ritualistic party in the Church at the present time must be traced to that remarkable stirring up of the University; and no power there was so prominent and distinct as that of the "Old Lion of Oriel." This power was more manifestly associated with his preaching than any other mode of influencing and awakening men. His pen was always able and subtle in its skill. He could cope with any antagonist, and express his views of doctrine and ritual in a manner to compel the admiration of those who most differed from him. For many years it has been admitted that there was no abler pen in England; it could be incisive, expressive, eloquent, and brilliant by turns. But it was that living presence and voice which moved the undergraduates, and acted with such inspiring energy upon many of the professors and tutors. The crowds which thronged to the University church, or to his own, to listen to his voice were such as Oxford had never seen exceeded during the whole course of her history. It somewhat resembled the old revivals which were connected with the labours of the great Reformers whose names shine brightly in the chronicles of the Church. He was

assisted and equalled in some respects by many men of remarkable ability. Some of them were possessed of great scholarship, and were marked by peculiar refinement of taste and feeling. Keble had already consecrated his unique and exquisite genius to the same cause, and Pusey was cultivating his rich and scholarly mind in a service which still inspires his zeal. Froude, Palmer, Wilberforce, and others were following in the path of their great leader, and a host of still younger men were ready to embark in an enterprise to which minds of an ardent and poetic turn had imputed the glory and splendour of a spiritual crusade. God's Church was said to be encumbered in a most objectionable way with the impediments which had been thrown in her path by an ignorant and unsympathising world. Her limbs were said to be bound in the chains of a corrupt Erastianism, and her glory was obscured by the foul atmosphere of a liberal policy and principle which was gathering about her. The Reformation of Henry VIII. was pronounced an unwise and unnecessary movement, and was traced to the evil influence of such men as Luther and Calvin, who had done more harm than good in Christendom. The time had come for a real reformation, if not, as some must almost have thought from the first, for a return to the bosom of that ancient Church from which we had become divorced through the impolitic action of Henry and his advisers. An Eirenicon must have been in the minds of some of the most comprehensive and far-seeing of the leaders of the Oxford movement.

It is quite true that Dr. Newman observes, in his defence of his life against Mr. Kingsley, that a sermon preached by Mr. Keble in the University pulpit on July 14th, 1833, was the start of the religious movement to which we have referred; but neither that sermon nor any others preached by Mr. Keble or their mutual friends and colleagues, stood so intimately related to the great upheaval of religious thought and feeling as Dr. Newman's own sermons. He wrote in the *Apologia*—"Living movements do not come of committees, nor are great ideas worked out through the post, even

though it had been the penny post." Nor do great religious movements, as a rule, ever rise save in connection with the voice of some living and earnest man. The books which have moulded the thoughts and inspired the sentiments of men have been numerous; but the original sources and means of stirring large multitudes have ever been of the sort which the tongue has furnished, rather than the pen.

And we have no difficulty in understanding how it was that Dr. Newman attained such power over men if we turn to his sermons. Their re-publication during recent years has been a valuable contribution to this portion of our literature. No other sermons but Robertson's have attained equal fame. In many respects they may be said to have fewer claims upon the notice of coming generations than those of the Brighton preacher. They were closely identified with the great movement which called them forth, and whose principles they so clearly and sharply enunciated. Not a little of their power for impressing men must be attributed to the circumstances in the midst of which they were preached. It is, indeed, somewhat necessary to an approximate appreciation of them that we should be familiar with the nature of that revival which gave them birth, and which they in turn helped to maintain. The fact that they were preached in the old University town or its suburb, and that they would in all cases be listened to by men of mark and influence, in that city of classic traditions and national renown, could not fail to impart to their perusal a special interest. The voice whose echoes float toward us through the events of so many years once rang forth its clear and earnest notes in the presence of men who now preach by hundreds in our national pulpits, debate in our halls of Parliament, or administer the laws of the land in high quarters. They were in some sense the herald-proclamation of the coming of a new era to the Church; and in as true a sense they were the recognitions which hailed the arrival of that period.

We do not know if Dr. Newman has published any

sermons since he retired from the Church of his first love. We confess to a feeling of sadness which often haunts us, that so great a man should withhold from his generation, during these years, the advantage of that marvellous gift of preaching and teaching by which he is so greatly distinguished. We are satisfied that wherever his sermons are read, they cannot fail to produce those results which were associated in a still greater measure with the hearing of them from the preacher's voice. Living utterances such as they were do not lose their power during even many generations. And in centuries to come, they will suitably represent the opinions on most doctrinal and practical religious questions which lay at the foundation of the Oxford Revival of 1833.

Our quotations, such as we make, will be taken from only two of the eight volumes which have been published; and these are the parochial and plain sermons. We conceive that this sort of sermon may most fitly be accepted as a test of his real power.

It will be admitted by all who have made themselves acquainted with them, that one leading and conspicuous quality by which they are marked is their fearless and resolute mode of dealing with the conscience. We should be inclined to affirm that this is their one most striking characteristic. We know of no preacher who so highly exalts the solemn majesty of conscience as Dr. Newman. Mr. Melvill could preach sometimes in such a way that you trembled at the sound of that incriminating voice, as it dealt home upon you the clear accusations against your sin, your folly, or your indifference. It had a way of making you feel very uncomfortable; and perhaps a large number of persons who sometimes dropped into St. Margaret's Church on Tuesday mornings, were often well-nigh afraid to repeat their visits, lest they should be arraigned and convicted before a bar from which they contrived to turn away while life passed on smoothly in its even tenor. But Newman had still greater power in his dealings with the conscience. He preached as if man were all conscience, or certainly as if that part of

his moral nature had been left unchallenged by the preachers of recent generations. He rebuked its indolence, he exposed its subterfuges. He showed the disgraceful nature of some of its courses when religion drew near with its solemn claims, and he laid bare with unflinching scorn the hollow objections which many urged against that religion itself. He preached as a John Baptist might. No sins escaped the withering fury of his denunciation, no folly could elude the dexterous pursuit of his energetic will. You did not sit in church to hear quiet or pleasant platitudes which skimmed the surface of moral duty, and lulled the heart to peaceful dreams of everlasting rest. The established churches had been roused by the earnest Gospel which Charles Simeon and his compeers had pronounced; but church-goers were still, to a great extent, dead and deaf to the solemn voice of righteousness. This Fellow of Oriel preached with the passionate earnestness of a new Wesley. He did not rant and rave, but men knew that he was in earnest. He lay his appeal to their consciences, and conscience acknowledged the truthfulness of the plea.

It is known to all who have read Dr. Newman's writings that he is not deficient in a knowledge of the innermost and tenderest feelings of the human heart. He has not been unacquainted with the deep things of the emotional life which dwell within us all. He has fathomed many of the depths, and scaled many of the heights of love. Now and then you come across passages even in his most critical and controversial writings which reveal the presence and power of tender sentiments in his soul. His allusions to the quiet and softer feelings of our hearts are often full of exquisite beauty. But he holds the emotional nature in check, and, instead of approaching men on the line of their sentiments, he merely alludes to these in passing, and sweeps on with strong determination to the realms of conscience. He never pauses till he has entered those realms; and then he "lays about him" with the power and skill of one who has faced the most honest investigations of a personal kind, and believes that men must

be moved in this part of their natures or not at all. You can see, from the principles and habits of the man, that he would set a very slight value upon any successes which he might obtain through an appeal to the feelings. He cannot derive satisfaction from his ministry until it have founded its claims to success upon the triumphs which it wins in the domain of conscience. We suspect that he views with a qualified regard the eminent achievements which many of his illustrious colleagues attained in this particular mode of ministerial work. He spoke as one who had measured the depths of hollowness which are often to be met with where feeling and passion are regarded as the dominating powers of religion. Until conscience should be won to the side of God and truth, no other victories could excite the ardour of his gratitude. He was too much of a student of our complex being not to know that the emotions which dwell within us are ever on the side of the Christian religion when its appeals are set forth with any skill and power. He was not ignorant of the grand emotional appeal which is always present in the tale of our Lord's sufferings and death. The cross was the tenderest and mightiest force of which men knew, and the Church had gained marvellous triumphs by means of it. But with this preacher even that tender and gracious appeal must be brought home directly to men's consciences, or nothing would be done towards making them truly religious. He was too much of a Christian to attach himself unduly to the ministration of law; but he never left out Sinai from his system of religion. He would *always* say to an inquirer who brought the question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Do the Commandments." The proffer of grace and mercy was a secondary matter in point of time. He could deal with no sinner who had not been bowed by a sense of the majesty of the Divine law. In a sermon upon "The Power of the Will," he thus treats of the false excuse which is often urged in extenuation of an incomplete and imperfect spiritual life:—

"Are not the feelings as distinct as well can be, between remorse and repentance? In both a man is

very sorry and ashamed of what he has done; in both he has a painful foreboding that he may perchance sin again, in spite of his present grief. You will hear a man perhaps lament that he is so weak, so that he quite dreads what is to come another time, after all his good resolutions. There are cases, doubtless, in which a man *is* thus weak in power, though earnest in will; and, of course, it continually happens that he has ungovernable feelings and passions, in spite of his better nature. But, in a very great multitude of cases, this pretence of want of power is really but a want of will. When a man complains that he is under the dominion of any bad habit, let him seriously ask himself whether he has ever *willed* to get rid of it. Can he, with a simple mind, say in God's sight, 'I wish it removed'?

"A man, for instance, cannot attend to his prayers; his mind wanders; other thoughts intrude; time after time passes, and it is the same. Shall we say, this arises from want of power? Of course it may be so; but before he says so, let him consider whether he has ever roused himself, shaken himself, awakened himself, got himself to will, if I may so say, attention. We know the feeling in unpleasant dreams, when we say to ourselves, 'This is a dream,' and yet cannot exert ourselves to will to be free from it; and how at length, by an effort, we will to move, and the spell at once is broken; we wake. So it is with sloth and indolence; the Evil One lies heavy on us, but he has no power over us except in our unwillingness to get rid of him. He cannot battle with us; he flies; he can do no more, as soon as we propose to fight with him."

He who holds that view of human nature cannot be expected to treat it with the same softness as one who in any sense regards weakness of will as an actual infirmity of the soul, which procures and even merits the charitable pity of both God and man.

In his sermon upon "Promising without Doing," he thus deals with the mistake which is often made, of putting good feelings for real religious principle:—

"Consider how often this takes place. It is the case with the young necessarily, who have not been exposed

to temptation. They have (we will say) been brought up religiously, they wish to be religious, and so are objects of our love and interest; but they think themselves far more religious than they really are. They suppose they hate sin and understand the truth, and can resist the world, when they hardly know the meaning of the words they use. Again, how often is a man incited by circumstances to utter a virtuous wish, or propose a generous or valiant deed, and perhaps applauds himself for his own good feeling, and has no suspicion that he is not able to act upon it! In truth, he does not understand where the real difficulty of his duty lies. He thinks that the characteristic of a religious man is his having correct notions. It escapes him that there is a great interval between feeling and acting. He takes it for granted he can do what he wishes. He knows he is a free agent, and can, on the whole, do what he will; but he is not conscious of the load of corrupt nature and sinful habits which hang upon his will, and clog it in each particular exercise of it. He has borne these so long, that he is insensible to their existence. He knows that in little things, where passion and inclination are excluded, he can perform as soon as he resolves. Should he meet in his walk two paths, to the right and left, he is sure he can take which he will at once, without any difficulty; and he fancies that obedience to God is not much more difficult than to turn to the right instead of the left."

This is spiritual anatomy. He knows our inward nature, and very unreservedly declares his opinion of its weakness and sinfulness. No keener insight has penetrated its mysteries in our time, and no more earnest voice has pronounced upon its lamentable deficiencies.

It is quite natural to turn to the sermon on "The Religion of the Day" for some passages which may very adequately express Dr. Newman's sentiments upon such topics as would be likely to exhibit another characteristic of the preacher—his prophet-like admonitions of the errors and sins of our time. He did not proclaim a soothing and consolatory Gospel; he came forth to utter

ofttimes in the ears of men burning protestations against their hypocrisies and sins. We may almost say that he looked upon it as being his mission to wield a sword, and upon that of others as requiring that they should bring the "balm of Gilead" to wounded and suffering hearts. With Elijah-like energy and daring he denounced the hollow professions which were made in the name of religion, and rent to pieces the plausible pretensions of its defenders. No falsehood, however specious, could abide the keen glance of that eagle eye, or endure the probing skill of that fearless hand. Said he—

"In every age of Christianity, since it was first preached, there has been what may be called a *religion of the world*, which so far imitates the true religion as to deceive the mutable and the unwary. The world does not oppose religion *as such*. I may say it never has opposed it. In particular, it has, in all ages, acknowledged in one sense or other the Gospel of Christ, fastened on one or other of its characteristics, and professed to embody this in its practice; while by neglecting the other parts of the holy doctrine, it has, in fact, distorted and corrupted even that portion of it which it has exclusively put forward, and so has contrived to explain away the whole, for he who cultivated only one precept of the Gospel to the exclusion of the rest, in reality attends to no part at all."

"What is the world's religion now?" he asks further on; and replies—"It has taken the brighter side of the Gospel—its tidings of comfort, its precepts of love; all darker, deeper views of man's condition and prospects being comparatively forgotten. This is the religion *natural* to a civilised age, and well has Satan dressed and completed it into an idol of the Truth. As the reason is cultivated, the taste formed, the affections and sentiments refined, a general decency and grace will, of course, spread over the face of society, quite independently of the influence of revelation. That beauty and delicacy of thought, which is so attractive in books, extends to the conduct of life, to all we have, all we do, all we are. Our manners are courteous; we

avoid giving pain or offence; our words become correct; our relative duties are carefully performed. Our sense of propriety shows itself even in our domestic arrangements, in the embellishment of our houses, in our amusements; and so also in our religious profession. Vice now becomes unseemly and hideous to the imagination, or, as it is sometimes familiarly said, 'out of taste.' Thus elegance is gradually made the test and standard of virtue, which is no longer thought to possess intrinsic claim on our hearts, or to exist further than it leads to the quiet and comfort of others. Conscience is no longer recognised as the independent arbiter of actions, its authority is explained away; partly it is superseded in the minds of men by the so-called moral sense, which is regarded merely as the love of the beautiful; partly by the rule of expediency which is forthwith substituted for it in the details of conduct. Now, conscience is a stern, gloomy principle; it tells us of guilt and of prospective punishment. Accordingly, when its terrors disappear, then disappear also, in the creed of the day, those fearful images of the Divine wrath with which the Scriptures abound. They are explained away. Everything is bright and cheerful. Religion is pleasant and easy; benevolence is the chief virtue; intolerance, bigotry, excess of zeal, are the first of sins. Austerity is an absurdity, even firmness is looked on with an unfriendly, suspicious eye. On the other hand, all open profligacy is discountenanced; drunkenness is accounted a disgrace; cursing and swearing are vulgarities."

We might quote further, but these sentences suffice to show the stern aspect of that daring spirit as it surveyed the condition of English society at a time when Oxford became the centre of the new religious feeling. These words come from a nature that would hold no truce with an evil generation and a fascinating world. He spoke the "Word of the Lord" with all the earnestness of a prophet. Towards the close of this same remarkable sermon occurs the phrase which exposed him to the severe criticism of friends and foes alike. He refers to it, and explains it in his *Apologia*:—"I will not shrink from uttering my firm con-

viction that it would be a gain to this country were it vastly more superstitious, more bigoted, more gloomy, more fierce in its religion, than at present it shows itself to be. Not, of course, that I think the tempers of mind herein implied desirable, which would be an evident absurdity; but I think them infinitely more desirable and more promising than a heathen obduracy, and a cold, self-sufficient, self-wise tranquillity."

He did not fawn upon his hearers, but pointed out to them, in a very clear and positive way, the sins which would draw them on to ruin. Such preaching in all ages has had power. The human spirit bows before the man who brings from the Most High a message of stirring moral earnestness, and treats the messenger with respect and reverence.

We think the ministry of Dr. Newman was not as complete and helpful as every ministry should be. It did not bring comfort to men; and they want it. Sinai could never have proved a rallying place for men on any conceivable consideration. Calvary was needed to rouse their expiring energies, and waken their slumbering hopes. Dr. Newman might argue that such persons as he inveighed against in the words we have quoted, would, unless they had been previously aware of its true place, have guessed that such a text as "Our God is a consuming fire" occurs in the Old Testament Scriptures and not in the New. But he may have fallen into the opposite extreme of attaching too much importance to the severe denunciations and alarming admonitions of the Scriptures.

There is one thing about which no dispute can arise —he is eminently practical in his mode of preaching. You are not treated, even by his logical and powerful mind, to elaborate and cogent disquisitions upon the doctrines of Scripture, so much as to useful practical lessons upon which the preacher may utter his mind with a becoming dogmatism, and the hearer at once conclude that his duty is plainly visible before his eyes. Learned and logical discourses have their place in the realm of Christian instruction, and will always be valued by a certain class of people who will gain

spiritual as well as intellectual benefit therefrom. But the larger number are conscious of a deeper and more constant need. They want to be reminded, day by day, and almost hour by hour, of the claims of the higher life, and to be shown with much plainness how they may seek after it, and attain to it. There was a revival of theological inquiry and learning consequent upon the movement of thought and feeling which marked the period of his memorable work; but its best results consisted in the deep sense which it helped to create of the infinite value of plain and practical religion. We do not perceive that he had much taste, any more than many others of his co-workers, for the merely Ritualistic side of that movement. His place was that of the leader who had to infuse into men the sentiments and principles which must be at the foundation of a great and religious enterprise. And without the preaching of Newman, it is right to say, there would not have been the awakenment which has never since become altogether dormant. Preaching is the main instrument of moral and spiritual warfare wherewith the leader and reformer in Christendom can alone do effectual battle with the forces by which he is opposed. Dr. Newman was the Preacher of the Oxford movement, without whose passionate and rousing sermons it would not have taken the form or attained the proportions which have given to his name an illustrious place in the religious history of the last forty years.

The Rev. Thomas Binney:

ONCE OF THE KING'S WEIGH-HOUSE CHAPEL, LONDON.

If we review the religious history of the last forty years, it is fair to say that Mr. Binney was the most conspicuous personage amongst Nonconformists during that period. We write this without claiming for him all the titles to fame which have been warmly stated since his death. Many things are, as a rule, written and spoken upon the departure of a great public character which pass unconsciously beyond the fair boundaries of reasonable and solid judgment. The readiest pens at such a time are those which are inspired by affection and gratitude, and the most eloquent tongues are such as have often held converse with the lamented dead. Few Nonconformists of this generation were dismissed to the hallowed rest of the grave with more kindly and intelligent criticism by the daily journals than he whose name we put down in the list of departed worthies. Churchmen, without grudge, uttered a kindly eulogy over the grave of one who had spoken strongly in bygone years of the evils which he considered were bound up in the Church Establishment. It was admitted, on all sides, that a man of very unusual mark had lived an honourable and useful life in our midst; and that from his fellow-citizens and fellow-Christians he deserved a generous remembrance. Mr. Binney could never have wished for a kindlier leave-taking from the generation he had so faithfully served.

It was very generally felt that one of the greatest of Nonconformist preachers of these forty years had gone from us. Few would think of comparing Mr. Binney with Robert Hall; and the great Baptist preacher belonged to a former period. There have been,

it must be claimed, many men during the space of time mentioned, who, in a variety of ways, far surpassed Mr. Binney—some in massive and wide learning, some in the creative faculty which produced great thoughts or beautiful visions of the imagination, others in the gift of charming and musical speech, and many in that impassioned and electric ardour which is the most signal mark of the orator. But in a few respects he had no peer, and in some others his power was so manifest that it would have procured him distinction. We do not say that there was a balance of powers, mentally and spiritually considered, in this able preacher—it was hardly that; but some of his qualities were of an order to compel sincere admiration, and of none could any honest critic speak other than with respect. We have already written of some Nonconformist preachers who possessed either qualities of mind or attainments of culture greatly in excess, in certain directions, of his; but not one of them had so many of those qualities which never fail to compel the notice of all classes of sermon-hearers. Mr. Binney had not nearly so large a popular following as some of his less distinguished brethren, for his habits of thought and expression removed him somewhat from the appreciation of the populace; but he always enjoyed the respect of really intelligent men of every class. We write this with the feeling in our heart that there were other preachers to whom we would have listened with a more intense gratification.

It is our intention to ask what was the secret of that power which he wielded over his generation as a preacher; and, in passing, to indicate some of its defects.

Mr. Binney owed much of his influence over men from the pulpit to his remarkable personal advantages. Varied tastes would have found what even in this respect would have pleased them better elsewhere. But for hold upon the general public few possessed these advantages to the same extent. It is interesting to recall the impressions which were made upon most persons, with a keen eye for whatever is remarkable in public influence, when they first saw the great preacher

of the Weigh-house Chapel enter his own pulpit. As he emerged from the vestry door, clad in the simplest garb of his order, you were impressed by the Herculean stature of the man, and, as you caught a nearer view, when he ascended the stairs, by the robust health which indicated undoubted physical vigour of the highest order. Then, as that face turned towards the silent congregation you gazed at the lofty, very lofty forehead, from which waved backward in careless fashion the thin locks of brown hair. And those eyes, already with the fires lighted in them, ready to flash forth upon the assembled people the thought and sentiments which gave to them their lustre and earnestness. There, before you, was a man, and not a mere pulpit-dramatist; a simple, strong, and true man. For this service you were sure of being spoken to by one who would use no cant, nor offend you with conventional pretensions. When those lips opened, and quiet words summoned all to prayer, only those to whom prayer was either an unfamiliar or an unwelcome duty could refuse the invitation. Those utterances, so solemn, so brief, and so reverential, brought you near to the Mercy-seat of God, and helped you to feel that there was One, Eternal and Almighty, to whom you, too, could tell the earnest wants and wishes of your heart. You may have come to hear the noted preacher; he has made you forget preaching in the act and blessedness of prayer. The simple meeting-house in which you are sitting, surrounded with the shops and warehouses of the busy City, with the din and roar of its ceaseless traffic falling upon your ear, becomes, for all that, a solemn temple of holy worship, within which you cannot help feeling there is somewhere to be found the mercy-seat of God. You have none of those so-called aids to devotional sentiment. There is no fretted roof, dim and distant, rising upon lofty columns, stately and beautiful, with their carved and graceful capitals. Here are no long-drawn aisles, no "windows, richly dight, shedding a dim, religious light;" no walls covered with memorial tablets telling of buried generations of illustrious dead; no marble monuments and effigies of departed greatness; no stones in floor or

walls to remind you of centuries of famous history. There are no oaken stalls for learned and leisured ecclesiastics to mingle in worship with the trained sons of song, as pealing anthems and resounding chants rise to the arches of the gorgeous House of Prayer. The white-robed choristers are not here, nor the several ranks of clergy to take their special parts and places in the carefully-appointed worship. This one man, simple, plain, and full of calm dignity, will lead you to the Most High, and in time speak to you as His messenger. No part of the service is carelessly introduced; the hymn is not announced in an idle way, and, though the preacher cannot sing, he has a way of making others sing as if this were indeed the worship and service of God.

When he reads the Scripture it is as if he were reading its deep and spiritual meaning, as well as pronouncing its sublime and beautiful words. He is not reading in a monotone; he is imparting to Scripture what he himself, by the help of God's grace and his own experience, has come to know, as its sense and import. You never think of elocution; you do not dream of lessons from the stage; it is such reading as deep feeling and a good understanding can alone impart.

We mention these things, and attach to them considerable importance, because they form a striking and essential part of the impressive service with which the sermon is associated; and also because Mr. Binney himself valued, at a high estimate, these portions of Divine worship. Nothing, from the lifting of the hands in prayer to the lifting of the hands in blessing, was unimportant with him. His benediction was worth receiving; it seemed to bring God's blessing into your soul; it fastened the sermon in a sure place; it gave dignity and impressiveness to argument and statements, however stern and logical they may have been.

That dignified step, as it moved upward to the simple pulpit, that calm forehead, and that penetrating gaze caught your attention before the lips were opened; and though you may not have felt that the sermon was as great as the preacher's fame led you to expect, you

would never lose the devout impression which the whole service made upon your heart.

Mr. Binney's thinking, as it made itself apparent in his preaching, was strong and real in its nature. He had a *way with a thought* which was peculiarly his own. He seemed as though he had it in his hand for careful examination and consideration. At first he hardly appeared to know what to say about it; how to state the first impressions which he took from it. He acted as some naturalists do with their new-found specimens. You could perceive the interest and the enthusiasm of the man kindling over the matter. Something would be made of it soon; if you could afford to wait, in a few minutes you would be helped to see what the preacher saw, and to feel what he felt. It was not something with which he was playing; Mr. Binney was too much in earnest and too strong-minded for that. He was not, and he could not be a trifler with any subject which he undertook to consider. His utterances were sure to be marked by much robustness and common sense. With speculative subjects he had more affinity than some would give him credit for. He had not that courage, albeit his robustness of *physique* and firmness of speech, which gives perfect freedom to the toiling thought and inquiry of a metaphysician. No man can pursue metaphysical studies with free and decided interest who does not now and then relieve his mind by an expression of the conclusions to which his inquiries lead him. There are indications in Mr. Binney's volume of sermons that he was by no means indisposed to follow along the line of certain grave religious speculations. There can be no doubt but that he had seriously looked at some of the weightiest subjects which are being considered in our time. He was certainly familiar with them, and showed much anxiety to hear what others had to say about them. But his own expressions were always of the Socratic order. He suggested inquiries which others were likely to pursue with more energy because with greater freedom than himself. We do not wish it to be inferred from these remarks that we hold him to have been an intellectual or moral coward; but

there was, unquestionably, not a little timidity and caution displayed in speaking about points concerning which he had the knowledge that there were prejudices of a traditional and historic kind in the mind of his hearers. He would bravely utter a warm, indignant protest against some relic of superstitious faith, or some rotten dogma of bygone times; but he was sensitively and painfully cautious in guarding the ultimate impression which his words would leave upon the minds of those with whom he held himself in usual and common accord. Occasionally he appeared to lend more sanction than could be justified to that very feeble excuse for daring but honest inquiry, "that such and such a man was really sound in the fundamentals of the faith." Having been suspected in earlier days of not being so sound as he should have been, he was not grudging in his sympathy for those who were exposed to the insinuations and inuendoes of ignorant or cruel men.

The following words from his excellent sermon on "Salvation by Fire, and Salvation in Fulness" have the true ring of broad sentiment in them. They show the direction of his mind, and prove to us that he was willing to go further if timeliness and fitness in many respects would favour a fuller pronouncement:—

"The fact is that different churches and different schools of theology are in danger of holding their characteristic principles in a way that exaggerates them; they are not seen in their proper dimensions, from not being looked at in their just relations to other truths. Revivals and Reformations have too frequently been merely reactions against particular errors or prominent abuses. They have led often, and very naturally, to people running to the opposite extreme of what they saw to be wrong—as if they were then sure to be right. While restoring and establishing a lost truth, men get so exasperated against the error they oppose that they lose sight of some other truth of which that error may be an exaggeration."

He is combating the objections which some would urge against the truth which he is enforcing with much earnestness, that the great life to come will bear to us

rewards and blessings corresponding to the energy, fidelity, and wisdom of our efforts on earth. Some would be ready with the great Protestant watchword of "Justification by faith alone." Of these Mr. Binney said:—

"An almost exclusive attention has been given to one thing (a great truth) to the forgetfulness of another thing (equally a truth). Hence the difficulty felt in tolerating certain ideas and expressions—which, nevertheless, are simply the utterance of 'the mind of the Spirit'—on the worth and the rewardableness of that virtue which is the outflow and actings of a real, healthy Divine life. It may be difficult, but, depend upon it, it is not impossible to find some grounds of reconciliation between the doctrine of justification by faith and that portion of truth which underlays the error, against which we embodied our protest in the revival and re-assertion of the 'doctrine of a standing and falling Church.'"

We make the following extract from another portion of the same sermon, because it illustrates the cautious style in which he was accustomed to speak when he feared his words might probably mean to some a little more than he meant himself. Mr. Binney was a nervous and fidgety man. As his years increased, this nervousness did not lessen. He put himself too much in the position of hearer as well as preacher. Perhaps all great preachers will be good and careful hearers of their own sermons; but they will weaken the energy, and restrict the liberty of their utterances, if they are the most nervous members of their own congregations. We do not make the quotation *in extenso*, but simply connect together as much of it as will illustrate the view we have expressed, without at all weakening the force of the preacher's admirable remarks.

"Let us thank God that, in spite of much with which we may be offended in religious systems and religious communities, there may be true souls and loving hearts belonging to them all. Look at that poor Catholic girl, there! doing penance and counting her beads; repeating her 'aves,' and saying her 'paternosters;' lighting

a candle to this saint, or carrying her votive offering to another; wending her way in the dark, wet morning to early mass; conscientiously abstaining from flesh on a Friday; or shutting herself up in conventual sanctity, devoting her life to joyless solitude and bodily mortifications! She is imagining, perhaps, that she is piling up, by all this, a vast fabric of meritorious deeds, or at least, of acceptable Christian virtue. She may expect, on account of it, to hear from the lips of her heavenly Bridegroom, 'Well done, good and faithful' one; 'Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;' 'Thou shalt walk with Me in white, for thou art worthy.' *We*, however, believe that 'she labours in vain, and spends her strength for nought;' that she is building with wood, hay, and stubble;' and that the first beam of the light of eternity will set fire to her worthless structure, and reduce to ashes the labours and sacrifices of her whole life! Be it so. Her '*work* may be burnt, she may suffer *loss*,' but *she herself* may be mercifully *saved*. In the midst of all that mistaken devotedness to the gathering and amassing of mere lumber as materials for building up a Divine life, even in connection with the strange fire of an erring devotion flaming up towards saints and Madonnas, there may be in her soul a central trust in the sacrifice and intercession of the 'one Mediator,' which shall secure the salvation of the superstitious devotee, at the very moment that she witnesses the destruction of her works. The illustration is an extreme one. I purposely select it because it is so. The greater includes the less; and this large demand on your charitable sympathies, if you respond to it, will be felt and acknowledged to involve a principle applicable to inferior degrees of error—to other forms of mistaken zeal, of uninstructed religiousness, of ritual infatuation, and even of defective practical behaviour."

The preacher must have imagined that he was addressing a company of very narrow-minded hearers, hard of head, and harder still of heart, of whom he could say, that such an illustration of simple piety, so genuine and so natural, made a "large demand upon their charitable sympathies." Let us say that he was unduly

fidgeted about what some people would make out of his perfectly frank admission, that an unsophisticated Roman Catholic girl would, by God's good mercy, find her way to heaven. And this was the mood in which he was too much given to humour the ignorant prejudices, and sometimes irreligious passions, of religious men. We think he strained the interpretation of our Lord's conduct in withholding truth until men are able to bear it.

Mr. Binney's style was at once clear and forcible. He was, as is well known, given to too much speech where less would have been more effectual for the object he sought. This habit led him, it must still further be admitted, to the borders of prolixity; but whatever language he used was sure to be clear and powerful. He often spoke twice where once would have sufficed; but both times he would use the simplest and strongest style of speech. When he first became a preacher the style which was most imitated was that which had come into fashion during the last century—a style which was more felicitous and ornamental than plain and powerful. Addison was more in favour than Burke; Johnson's rotund periods rather than his expressive statement of his meaning, when those thoughts of his had meaning. One may accept, on the whole, Carlyle's dictum on the great Doctor's writing. They were "*sincere* words, those of his; he meant things by them. A wondrous buckram style—the best he could get to then; a measured grandiloquence, stepping, or rather stalking, along in a very solemn way, grown obsolete now; sometimes a tumid *size* of phraseology not in proportion to the contents of it; all this you will put up with. For the phraseology, tumid or not, has always *something within it.*" The age of the Collyers, Claytons, and Thorpes was an age which needed a reproof. You might often listen to sermons conceived after the style of the happy or majestic writers of the era of Addison or Johnson, and go away wondering what, after all, the men had been saying which could not have been said to you with more real fervour, and in a far simpler way, by some good Methodist local preacher. When preachers talked of God as the "Supreme Ruler of all mundane affairs," and of man as a "creature passing along this

terrestrial plane of existence to that supernal state of eternal joy"—it was time for a clear head and an honest tongue to be welcomed to the front. "Hervey's Meditations," "Sturm's Reflections," and "Blair's Rhetoric," were having it mostly their own way. Robert Hall had spoken the English of Burke with more than the success of the senator; and noble, simple John Foster was toning down whatever there was of a pompous and meretricious element in the style which he found in vogue, in those able discourses of his, which were delivered to week-day congregations at Bristol. And this plain, clear-looking, sturdy Northumbrian student, from Wymondley Academy, could not spend his precious time in producing half-rhythmical discourses, to be set off still more by the graces of preachers to whom "gown and bands" were the necessary adjuncts of ministerial influence. What he had to say must be said in words which would not pass beyond the size or misrepresent the quality of the thoughts. The turgid, pompous oratory which had been in favour with a previous generation could never be adopted by him. The man was not without an eye for powerful and in a way musical speech, but words must stand for things even more than they did with Samuel Johnson. He had, as every careful observer must have noticed who heard him speak frequently, a very great love for language. He weighed and measured words as though they were jewels of the first quality. When, some twenty years ago, he delivered a charge at the ordination of a minister now known as one of our ablest novelists, in the little chapel of a quiet country town, overlooking the South coast, he took for his text, "My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart, and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly." These, doubtless, represented his highest conception of a preacher's duty; it was the ideal which he followed with rare fidelity to the end.

There is something to be said in favour of a generation whose ears had been attuned to the melodious eloquence of preachers who had aimed rather at sound than sense, that it should so cordially have approved of the new candidate for public acceptance. The age, it is

true, was beginning to weary of platitudes, whether in the pulpit or the press. It would have to endure a good deal more of them until their disuse should be doomed by the verdict of outraged common sense and common honesty. But Carlyle had begun to protest, by his desperate and reckless adoption of a style which set at naught every canon of criticism, against the prevalent fashion. Mr. Binney deserves grateful praise for having been the most powerful opponent of eloquent wind-bags in the pulpit of his time. It is within bounds to say that he inaugurated the new era of plain, sensible, and straightforward public speech in Nonconformist pulpits. The most sensible and practical men could hear him with perfect satisfaction. Years before he died he had the pleasure of seeing a new race of preachers arise, who aimed at the employment of simple modes of speech when they addressed their fellow-men upon themes of high and everlasting concern. We can hardly overestimate the obligations of these preachers to the distinguished minister of the Weigh-house who bore the penalties of being one of the first to insist upon speaking to men with clear and forcible words.

He never attained the art, which few indeed do acquire, of expressing thought in so brief and pointed a way, that improvement could hardly be suggested. None have surpassed Mr. Robertson in this respect. Mr. Binney was too elaborate, and always liable to become diffuse. It was a very thoughtful diffuseness; but his tendency to a somewhat ponderous mode of treating subjects very often endangered perspicuity of thought. The clearly and sharply cut expression which says all in few words, and leaves no sense of imperfection on the mind, was rarely secured by him. He appeared to labour under the impression that hearers could only be reached by iteration and reiteration. If he deemed a thought or a truth to be unusually important, he would not put it aside until he had said all he could find to say about it.

It verges upon what we have written *to* remark, at this point, that Mr. Binney was a rat*io*nalist in the pulpit. We do not, of course, use the te*r*m as one of opprobrium, but of honour. He had a faculty of mind

which could but reason about things. He had a sympathy rising always into enthusiastic reverence for the Apostle of the Gentiles, the great reasoner upon God's government of the world. He would know, if it were possible, the sense, the meaning, the origin of things. It was remarked by one of his ablest posthumous critics, that he possessed rare analytical powers, which would have fitted him for high rank on the Bench. He could analyse a great truth or a mass of facts which he made his study with perhaps greater skill than any living preacher. He may not have possessed as much keen insight and exquisite penetration as some men in our time, but he could handle, and classify, and arrange evidence and statements with unsurpassed ability. Those who have heard him treat a subject which would not yield its treasures of information and lessons of instruction, save to resolute and pains-taking care, will remember how he laboured at the pleasant toil with all the earnestness of his athletic mind. He would poise over a sophistry as an eagle poises in mid air over its helpless victim before it swoops down with pitiless fury upon its prey. His eye had the eagle-flash in it, and all who looked, knew that sooner or later, the prey would be his own. Thomas Binney, in the moment before he laid his grip on a sophism that he might tear it to pieces before your eyes, was a sight not to be forgotten. It had the exhilaration of a gladiatorial spectacle. It may not have been the highest kind of spectacle upon which you would wish to look when sitting in a Christian temple; many preachers would have been more to your taste; but if reasoning with an antagonist ever falls within the sphere of a Christian minister, there have been few men who excelled our preacher in this department of pulpit work.

We should add that this analytical faculty was often brought to bear upon themes whose consideration did not necessarily involve dealing with an opponent. It enabled him to discover the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which would aid and guide the humble Christian, or impress and arouse the careless and hardened sinner. Much of his power in this respect may be seen in the sermon upon "Salvation by fire, &c.," to

which we have before alluded. It was by earnestly pursuing some line of resolute thought that he was able to bring forth things new and old for the edification of his hearers. He appears to have endured a kind of agony while he was grappling with a thought. Latterly he had a wonderful habit of sitting very quiet while others were speaking. None can forget his fingers at his mouth, and the nibbling process through which they passed.

With what power he could place himself in the very circumstances which he so graphically depicted, when biography or history formed the subject of his discourse! It has been remarked of a great actress, not long removed by death, that she was once asked how she studied her parts. She replied that she always tried to fancy herself in the position of the persons whose acts she had to represent. Mr. Binney, when he spoke of Scripture characters and Scripture scenes, stood with the men and women amidst the scenes which he described. He gave to every event a living value by this means, which it would not otherwise have possessed for his hearers. In his own way he was dramatic. He spoke the words as if the real speaker were there. We shall never forget hearing him quote, when he preached the first sermon of the volume, the memorable passage which records the words of our Lord to Philip. The scene reappeared: we saw the Great Master and His disciples; we heard the yearning request of Philip; we beheld the impression which the words of Jesus made upon the men who had a share in the event of that day. The preacher was in company with the band of Christ's followers, and he acknowledged the power and glory of the Redeemer of men in the solemn emphasis and feeling with which he recalled the touching incident to our recollection. Few men could read the Scriptures as he did.

As we write this we are reminded of another characteristic of his pulpit-influence. He had great reverence for the sacred writings, and made every doctrine and all his teaching stand or fall by them. The language of Scripture must have had an unspeakable charm for him. Its pure, sweet, homely Saxon would have had a spell for his heart under any

circumstances. He paid great respect to the learned investigations of criticism, which helped to a fuller and more exact acquaintance with the sacred text; but he would never have preferred other renderings for the sake of having something new to say to his congregation. None could complain that he was a blind, unreasoning idolater of the Bible. He was not afraid of inquiry or criticism; he paid cheerful and abundant honour to men whose deep and special culture fitted them to serve him in making its teachings clearer and ampler for spiritual instruction. It was evident that he held such men in high regard, and laid their learning under constant contribution to his sermons. He was "mighty in the Scriptures." We might call him an expository preacher, although his style of exposition did not resemble that which is in vogue in the Scotch pulpit. Much of the preaching which is preserved for us in the volume of representative discourses is really expository. He "searched the Scriptures" after the true Berean fashion, and obtained the results which are credited to the good fame of that people. He aimed at standing with the writers of Scripture, and if he were thus put apart from the leaders of modern thought, he did not chafe at the separation. It would be possible to quote many portions of his discourses in support of our view; but the best testimony is that which is to be obtained from their perusal. Scripture will be seen to be the foundation of nearly all he says. A new light often breaks forth from a familiar passage as he mentions it in support of his reasonings or declarations. He would quote it as against himself; as, for instance, when he refers to the doctrine of purgatory as not being so unnatural an idea, "for something of the sort would really seem to be sadly wanted." He adds —"I don't believe in it. I don't believe that Scripture reveals to us such a third world." He travelled no farther than Scripture gave him guidance. He was too sensible a man not to know that there was a region beyond, however indisposed he might be to speak of it.

A brilliant weekly journal wrote of Mr. Binney's burgher-like quality of mind and style of preaching, laying especial stress upon the evidence in this direction

furnished by his popular book on "Is it Possible to Make the Best of Both Worlds?" We are willing to admit that he appealed with unusual effect to a class of minds which are numerous among our mercantile and trading communities. There are numbers of men who are ready to adopt with all the energy of their spirits such views of Christian truth as will comport with the employment of intense and absorbing earnestness in the business of daily life. They are not disposed to rank low in this passing world, nor to risk the loss of the next. These are the shrewd, thriving, enterprising, victorious men of business. To such this *bourgeois*-preacher appealed with large success. They listened with ready attention, and hailed him as the highest type of a preacher. He could interpret for them the business-like wisdom of the Old Testament. Some wanted their lives pitched to a higher key; to such Mr. Binney did not speak with nearly the same effect.

The volume of sermons which was issued in 1869, as a memorial of forty years' ministry, is in many respects an interesting contribution to his fame. Many of the sermons are treatises rather than pulpit discourses. No extracts from them, or from any of his published sermons, can represent to those who never heard him the quarter of his power. There was often an enthusiasm which glowed and blazed as sentence after sentence broke from his lips. And in those pauses, fuller of eloquence than his speech, there was a power which cannot be reproduced on the printed page. The emphasis, the intense and forcible expression, the reddening glow upon the ever florid cheeks, the emotion which stirred so passionately within the breast that none could doubt its existence—all these will live in the memory of those who have known them by personal observation; but they cannot be imagined by those who never listened to the man. This is the penalty of the greatest preaching, and herein also lies the secret of much of its power. Preaching of a kind which moves men when the preacher's voice is hushed in the silence of the grave is only granted to the rarest and brightest spirits who are endowed with the highest gifts of heaven. Such as these preach for evermore.

The Rev. Charles Haddon Spurgeon,

OF LONDON.

TWENTY and more years have passed away since this famous preacher quitted a very humble village ministry for the great world of London. It is but just to admit that from that time to this his real fame has suffered no diminution. There have, undoubtedly, been periods when his influence has had a wider reach than at others, and perhaps the preacher has already touched the zenith of his fame; but few men are enabled to look with fuller gratitude upon the success which they have attained. Mr. Spurgeon had no great advantages of birth or training, as the world estimates these things. In person he is neither impressive nor imposing. He is, as everybody knows, a broad-chested man of short stature, with a short, thick neck, and a face which bears hardly a conventional mark of refinement, culture, or grace. We are not conscious of deteriorating from this preacher's claims in the least degree when we add that if he were moving unrecognised amongst a throng of Nonconformist ministers he would not be singled out by one keen observer in a thousand as a man of world-wide fame and power. In his case all the acknowledged requisites, or even adjuncts, of popular power, save a very few, appear to be absent. Edward Irving was looked at with wonderment by passers-by as they met him in the streets of London; and a servant-girl, who had showed him into her mistress's drawing-room one day, reported that a Highland chieftain had called to see her. That tall form, that fine brow, and grand head would have compelled attention in a crowd, or on one of his own Scottish hill-sides. Other men have possessed exquisite grace of manner, and peculiar refinement of expression, by which they wielded a sceptral influence over multitudes who thronged to their church

or chapel doors. And these same qualities have served to aid and perfect the control which many admirable men have gained in very humble spheres. So far as we know, there is no single feature of Mr. Spurgeon's personal appearance which at all helps him to popularity. In spite of almost absolute defects and hindrances, he has won his way to the very centre of the world's attention. He came to a chapel which had lost much of its former influence, standing in a neighbourhood to which certainly none would be likely to go on a Sunday without being drawn thither by unusual attractions. It is true he had been partially trained in some agricultural school of a little importance, and had spent his time since then as an usher. He must have owned a tolerable knowledge of such subjects as fall within the range of a teacher's work in an ordinary boarding-school. His grandfather was an Essex Congregational minister, in one of those numerous villages in that agricultural county where the traditions of Puritanism still hold a place, as in no other county in England. His father, though a small shopkeeper, was also given to the exercise of the gift of preaching. The young man soon showed that he had power over his fellows, and displayed a remarkable gift of speech. So striking were his abilities, that London seemed the only fitting place for the exercise of qualities which had been proved so remarkable. To London he came, and he has been equal to any strain that has since tested his right to the fame he early secured.

During these twenty years many thousands of people, from every part of this Empire, and from almost every portion of the civilised world, have heard him preach. His name is known to every English-speaking man or woman in both hemispheres; and his sermons have been circulated week by week in many lands, and, we believe, have been translated into many languages. The largest Nonconformist chapel in England, by half, was built for him; and from the day of its opening until now there has has not been, we suppose, a single

unoccupied sitting when he has filled the pulpit, and perhaps, as a rule, even standing-room has been hard to find. He has preached in every corner of England, both in village chapels and in the more imposing edifices of our large towns, as well as on many village greens. Many a barn has been converted into a temple for the use of his ministry; and wherever he has gone crowds have flocked together to hear his voice. No man of his own country and time has shared in his popularity to a sufficient extent to claim to be put by his side. There have been popular preachers who have owned a commanding influence, but none have had a hundredth part of that which, with undiminishing fulness, he has possessed for twenty years. In many notable works of charity and practical usefulness he has won an eminence which is only less than that of the pulpit; and, whenever he has pleaded for any cause which has inspired his own eloquence, there has been no stint in the response which has been heartily given on the part of all classes of our population. Nobles and peasants have dropped their common gifts into the treasury of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. And, in addition to all this, while his hearers have gone forth to many lands carrying, we trust, whatever of goodness and wisdom fell from his lips into their hearts, he has been the main instrument of sending forth a large band of preachers trained under the influence of his remarkable power. He has thus multiplied his voice and efforts a hundred-fold.

This is a phenomenon for which we are called to account. There has been nothing like it in England since the days of Wesley. We have had able and splendid preachers in the pulpit of both church and chapel, but none whose fame has been equal to Mr. Spurgeon's. He has attained to this mark, as we have shown, by no personal or auxiliary advantages; nor do we think that he owes much, as many often do, to merely accidental circumstances as we call them. The elements of a certain greatness and the conditions of a certain fame were *in* him from the first. All rational and unprejudiced observers consent to this. Genius

and culture have recognised his claims and acknowledged that his popularity did not rest upon a shifting and unreal basis. We are told that Demosthenes suffered from an impediment in his speech, which being overcome, he became the greatest orator of antiquity, who could resist the bravest legions on earth by the force of his eloquence. But this humble Dissenting preacher passed upward from obscurity to the first rank of great popular preachers in an age when learning, and ancestry, and circumstance have considerable sway. How is this? What are the qualities of this preacher which have procured him all this fame and power? There are many qualities which have combined to produce the results which we indicate. We proceed to enumerate and describe some of them.

First in order, though not in power, may be mentioned those qualities which are more or less mental and natural.

1. Fluency.—The most pertinacious critic of a voluble speaker will admit that there is no particular virtue in not being able to find a word when it is wanted in a public address. Positive hesitation, and loss of words, cannot be an accomplishment of a public speaker. We are not at all unwilling to wait while some men, who have great, good, helpful thoughts to bring us, are puzzling themselves in the pursuit of the right words by help of which to express the thoughts. But hesitation and stammering are not adornments of the platform or the pulpit. As a rule, one would be disposed to say, that if a man chooses, or is chosen, to preach to his fellow-men, he should at least be gifted with the faculty of finding words when thoughts are ready for utterance. At the time when Mr. Spurgeon first came into the wide arena of Christian activity in this country, there was, perhaps, unusual stagnation in the churches. No one man, as an embodiment of moral and spiritual power, was then very prominently at work, so far as the masses of the people were concerned, or the great body of the middle-classes among the Nonconformists. No such acknowledged spiritual forces as Wesley or Whitfield, Rowland Hill, or Charles Simeon, or Dr.

Newman, now ruled any section of the religious world. All things seemed to be tending towards increasing respectability, and, probably, mediocrity and inanity. The world was, in a very striking degree, far more alive than the Church. Politics, science, *belles-lettres*, social reforms, were taking the lead; and we might have drifted seemingly into a state not much removed from the stagnation of the last century. Very beautiful, and, so far, thoughtful, sermons were being read and preached in our churches and chapels. Read sermons were in fashion. Nonconformist colleges were sending forth good students from their halls, in most respects fitted to present the truth of God to their people in a deliberate and careful manner. They were not likely to shock any by a too free-and-easy style, nor to drift into familiar colloquialisms. *Sermon-cases* came into fashion. The little black wallets might be seen in most respectable pulpits which were held by the younger generation, and chapel vied with church in the matter of a cultured style of composition. Red-hot words were seldom felt, falling down like a rain of fire upon men's consciences; and as for a stroke of real humour the house of God was invested with more than Judaic sanctity, and platitudes won the day. At such a time, the people at large knew how to relish a fluent, easy speaker, one who stood before them as a man and uttered freely the word of eternal life. It was interesting and exciting to listen to such a speaker. Humdrum was invaded with abundant success. Weary hearers turned from places where soporific sermons were seldom varied to the young man of twenty come from Cambridgeshire to New Park Street Chapel. He had no *sermon-book* but the Bible; and he spoke as if the words were dropped into his ear by some unseen prompters at his side. There might not be quite the same limpid beauty in his expressions, nor the same exquisite choice of words which marked the sustained compositions with which they had been familiar; but they were free and abundant in their flow from the preacher's lips. Some talked of the youthful Spencer of Liverpool, who was drowned in the Mersey just when fame was beckoning

him on. Others spoke of Whitfield, and fancied that here was a new apostle. Seldom had men listened to a freer, readier speaker. No more hesitation and stammering for that generation if they knew it. This man could speak boldly and forcibly, and him they would hear. It is quite clear that Mr. Spurgeon's style does not admit of the preparation of sermons upon the rote system. Those utterances of his were fresh and new as they were heard; they did not partake of the quality of previous preparation. They were not stale or flat, but glowed with the freshness of new-born life.

2. VIVACITY.—This quality stands closely associated with the last-mentioned. He was no drone. There is such a thing as a fluent drone. In fact, drones are generally fluent; and fluent speakers are liable to become dronish. There was no bathos. The feeling of heaviness did not come over you when you listened to him. His chapel was not a comfortable place to sleep in. The preacher himself could undertake to keep his hearers from dozing without resorting to a hymn in the middle of the sermon. We remember a fine old country church—one in which the barons of bygone centuries mingled their prayers and supplications with the cries of their retainers—in which, not long before the time of Spurgeon, the beadles walked up and down the aisles with their long black rods, looking after the ill-behaving and sleeping portion of the congregation. On one occasion a resolute spinster seized her *pattens* to threaten a certain beadle with a dangerous missile if he dared to touch her again with his rod. She believed that it was her privilege to sleep during the sermon if she chose. Mr. Spurgeon would have kept her awake. There were pleasant humorous breaks in his discourses. They sometimes bristled with sharp refreshing remark, to which none could refuse attention. He used hard, powerful, solemn words at times; but he did not wear a long and woe-begone face, as though he had come to execute a hearer. It was remembered that some preachers of an olden time were accustomed to use pleasantry, and satire, and anecdotes, and familiar illustrations when they were in the pulpit. Hugh Latimer was quoted as

a great authority for these customs ; and at least men relished it from this young man's lips. Sleeping in church was not a means of grace, and dulness in a preacher was not ordained of God. It was contended that it was permitted to him who would address his fellow-men upon the weightiest of all subjects to do so with the same freedom as if he spake to them upon any matter in a wise and earnest way. Mr. Spurgeon had a plentiful stock of human nature in him, and was not of the class of preacherish, dronish men, who would be almost afraid to smile in their pulpits for fear a great commandment should be broken. We were passing away from the manners and customs of our forefathers in many other respects—why not in this also ? The high stiff collars, wigs, pig-tails, and cumbrous costumes of an earlier period were almost forgotten. The stiffer manners were being displaced by an easier, franker mode of speech. Ponderous oratory and ponderous manners were destined to became obsolete. Mr. Spurgeon passed to the crest of that wave which would sweep it all away. Men had made a difference between church and home, which left the latter at an infinite distance from the former ; or lifted the church to a region of unreality which was a serious injury to religion. This preacher bridged the gulf for others, having leaped over it himself. Nasal pronunciation, pious twang, drawling cant would find no favour from him. The day for these things had vanished, or was vanishing for evermore.

3. Homeliness and Plainness.—From what we have written above, it will be found that we attach importance to the absence of mere orthodox platitudes from Mr. Spurgeon's style. He came forth as a kind of Cobbett of the pulpit. He had a strong relish for the Saxon tongue of the humbler people. He had too much sense born in him to quarrel seriously with those who, with the style of Burke and Hall, could wound the consciences, or comfort the hearts of men. But for himself, the speech of simple folk was all he asked or cared for, wherewith to tell them of the way to God. The words which his mother first dropped upon his ears were those with which he sought to make men acquainted

with the way of life. Those words were easily understood, and most easily used. They were always at hand, and they would express readily all he wanted to convey. The language which he uses is that with which the Bible and the "Pilgrim's Progress" make us familiar. It rings with the music of simple home-life. God thus speaks to us in words which we can appreciate, because by them we were entertained, impressed, and instructed, in the days of pleasant childhood. Instead of the preacher speaking to them as though he were a priest, he dealt with them as a brother with brethren. No old lady of his congregation needed to take her dictionary with her to chapel. The Bible and the "Baptist Selection" would do. There had come into vogue a sermonic style, pitched high for some hearers, and low for others. The style of the market, and the street, and the house was to be in vogue at New Park Street. Whatever Mr. Spurgeon wants to say he can say so as to make any man understand it, if he have himself the clue to its meaning. There is sometimes a kind of speech in use which is called Saxon, but which cannot justify the name. It is mere pulpit jargon, which has a degree of meaning or no meaning to certain hearers; beyond that, it never finds acceptance with anybody. None who ever heard him could say that he was a "fine rhetorician." All thought of oratory and rhetoric vanished as you listened to the homely words of the young preacher. Other men had controlled and led the people by means of high-flown, garnished eloquence, which excited their admiration. This man stirred them by help of living words taken of necessity as well as of choice from the simple vocabulary which every peasant and working man in England carries about with him in his head and heart. And so he found his way to the favour of Englishmen with unusual ease and power.

4. Point.—It would be easy to fill a considerable volume with extracts from Mr. Spurgeon's sermons in illustration of the pointed nature of his style. We are not treated by him to long talks in plain language about nothing. There is point in all that he says; and his writing is quite as pointed, if not indeed more so, than

his preaching. He can put his thoughts so clearly and strongly that none can fail to appreciate his right to be heard. We are aware that he is sometimes too careless and blunt in his choice of language and metaphors. He will condemn unsparingly when calmer thoughts would compel a juster mode of speech. Now and then his words are like drawn swords when quiet reproof would be anyhow enough; and we think a little careful reasoning would be much better. He can say very hard things in a very hard way; but it will be conceded by all who know anything of him that he is never unkind. We have not been among the number of his followers, but we confess to never having known of his using an expression which had in it any intentional unkindness towards any human being. There is no real bitterness in the man's soul: he is superior to the petty dislikes and jealousies which spoil the influence of some who are nevertheless highly gifted and good men.

In "John Ploughman's Talk," a little book which has had a large circulation, his pointed, epigrammatic style is seen to the fullest advantage. Open it where you choose there is point and sense—good sense expressed in a few striking, forcible sentences. In the chapter on "Patience," for instance, there are the following admirably expressed ideas and sentiments:—

"When one's flesh and bones are full of aches and pains, it is as natural for us to murmur as for a horse to shake his head when the flies tease him, or a wheel to rattle when a spoke is loose; but nature should not be the rule with Christians, or what is their religion worth? If a soldier fights no better than a ploughboy, off with his red coat."

"Impatient people water their miseries, and hoe up their comforts; sorrows are visitors that come without invitation; but complaining minds send a waggon to bring their troubles home in."

"Many people are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed; they chew the bitter pill which they would not even know to be bitter if they had the sense to swallow it whole in a cup of patience and water."

"A little sprig of the herb called content put into the

poorest soup will make it taste as rich as the Lord Mayor's turtle."

"To be poor is not always pleasant, but worse things than that happen at sea. Small shoes are apt to pinch, but not if you have a small foot; if we have little means it will be well to have little desires."

"A poor man's table is soon spread, and his labour spares his buying sauce."

And the following taken at random from other parts of the book will still further illustrate the remarks we have made :—

"The worst evil you can do a man is to injure his character, as the Quaker said to his dog, 'I'll not hurt thee, nor abuse thee, but I'll give thee an ill name.'"

"Luck generally comes to those who look after it, and my notion is that it taps at least once in a lifetime at everybody's door, but if industry does not open it away it goes."

"One man tries to see through a brick wall, and hurts his eyes; while another finds out a hole in it, and sees as far as he pleases."

"Don't throw away dirty water till you can get clean; keep on at scraping the roads till you can get better work; for the poorest pay is better than none."

"There's fire in the flint, cool as it looks. Wait till the steel gets a knock at it, and you will see."

"It is foolish to turn off a tried friend because of a failing or two, for you may get rid of a one-eyed nag and buy a blind one."

"Do not put a cat on a coach-box, or men in places for which they are not fitted. There's no making apples of plums; little minds will still be little, even if you make them beadles, or churchwardens."

"When you see a mad dog, don't argue with him unless you are sure of your logic; better get out of his way, and if anybody calls you a coward you need not call him a fool—everybody knows that."

"Franchise may be a very fine thing, but I should a good deal sooner get the freehold of my cottage if I could find the money to buy it. Magna Charta I don't know much about, but if it means a quiet home for everybody, three cheers for it."

It is impossible to make quotations enough to satisfy a wish to represent the power of such a man. In his own way he remains unequalled for aptness and power of illustration. It is such as suits the average intellect and heart far better for present use than that which takes us farther and deeper into the heart of things. There is no tiresomeness to a hearer when a preacher relieves the utterance of great truths by such quaint and homely illustrations as those which may be found in any number in his works. Mr. Spurgeon is familiar with perhaps most of our quaint old writers, and revels in the wide field of illustration which they furnish to a mind like his. He does not keep an illustration when he finds it, for the purpose of forcing it unnaturally upon any remark which he may have to make; but it comes when it is most wanted, and takes its most appropriate place, as though it had grown there, and met his eye for the first time in that spot.

5. COMMON SENSE.—You never feel in listening to Mr. Spurgeon that he is throwing dust in your eyes; he does not bore you with nonsense, but talks common sense up to the level of his perception of truth. If you were in an assembly where one of the most important subjects of which we can conceive, practical or speculative, was being discussed, and he were sitting upon the platform, you would be glad to know what he had to say about it. He does not talk for the sake of filling up time; he will have something sensible to say about everything upon which he gives an opinion. The balderdash which is so often uttered in the sacred cause of religion is not favoured by him. He may talk fast, and very often express an opinion which is more daring than wise, but he will never wear out your patience with expressions which have no kind of relation to the subject under consideration. He will not befool you with platitudes which may have a religious sound in them, but are utterly lacking in good solid sense.

6. REALITY.—As real a man as any living. He may not utter things which we could wish to have said; and he may favour tendencies of thought which are altogether foreign to what we may consider harmonious with the Word of God; but he is true to himself, and

consequently true to the whole world. "There's an honest man in that pulpit," may frankly be said whenever he stands up in any chapel in the nation. You are not asked to hear him that you may add further importance to his greatness, and help to blow the trumpet of his fame. The ring of that voice is the music of truth. Its words do not come up from the depths of a hollow heart. If he prays, you feel that he is praying in earnest, and with a desire for God's blessing. If he reads a hymn he does it in such a way, if he likes it, that you might think he had composed it for the occasion. When he reads the Bible it is with a reverent enjoyment that appears as fresh as though he had God's Word there before him for the first time. He means all he says to you; he does not deal in superfluities, nor cherish the practice of inflating his expressions to make them appear aërial and beautiful. And so he has held thousands after thousands under the sway of his influence. The most ardent scoffers at Revelation never dare to suspect his earnestness and sincerity; they can only hold him to be mistaken. We could wish that he had a chance of having some half-dozen talks with the sceptics about those great facts which are fundamental to our religion. Few men would have more power over them than he. That keen eye of his would detect quickly the weak places in their evil system; and that manly "fighting in the front" enables him to deal hard blows and telling ones upon falsehoods which will withstand any number of manœuvres. He has had a wide realm, and has sometimes risen to heights that are very giddy, but the good real man is as simple and true to-day, as he was in the earliest moments of his career.

7. Unselfishness.—Mr. Spurgeon has occupied a position of so much prominence that "the fierce light which beats upon a throne" has fallen upon him and his ministry. If there had been any of the too common marks of human frailty they would have been detected years and years ago. Had his vanity been at all strongly marked, or his care for himself unfailing, the opinion would have been freely circulated that he was

"not much better than the rest." But none have been able to condemn him on the score of selfishness. He has had opportunities of self-enrichment and aggrandisement, such as no other man of his time in similar circumstances has had. He might have lived in affluence and luxury. His income, without a strain, might now have been equal to a bishop's, and his children might be the prospective heirs to a fortune. It is true that, like a wise man, he has not lived in disregard of creature-wants and comforts; but he has not shown one particle of care for himself. He has not become a rich man through his own hard work. He has preached and lectured with incessant regularity during some of the years of his hardest toil, and could thereby have filled his own personal coffers with gold. But those earnings have been devoted to the great works which have kindled his zeal and sustained his energy. His chapel has been built, his college kept at its work, his orphanage maintained by the offerings which in many instances might have been diverted to his own use. And so it has come to pass that with untarnished lustre his name is kept shining in the list of illustrious men whom this nation delighteth to honour. He sought not himself, and the people have shown their sense of his absolute greatness by according him a fame which, in its way, is unparalleled in the history of this country.

We believe that Mr. Spurgeon owes very much to the dogmatic way in which he always speaks of God's Truth, and the convictions of his own soul. He is not a suggestive, inspiring, educative, and thoughtful preacher. Many who are willing to do all honour to such qualities of the man as have been enumerated in this paper, desire and need more instruction and inspiration than he can supply. They do not want the dogmatic assertions, the unquestioning acceptance of certain views of the Divine character, and of the Atonement of Christ, which may always be heard from his lips; indeed, they do not believe in them, but regard some of them as contrary to the truth. They admire his deep sincerity and indomitable earnestness; his

masculine sense and genuine good feeling. He is not so tender, nor so sympathetic, as their ideal preacher is required to be. He does not yield to certain aspects of human nature all the consideration which they claim; and his tenets, as he sometimes expresses them, are the reverse, seemingly, of those which fell from the lips of Jesus of Nazareth. When he took the Lord's Prayer from the lips of children who had not passed through a condition of human experience which marks the history of the regenerate, he showed that he had only skimmed the surface of some wide, deep abysses of thought. He is not, for all his popularity, the preacher for this age which is now appearing. That talk about the ever-old but ever-new truth, does not fit this case. All the very greatest preachers have responded to the deepest wants and cries of the age into the midst of which they came. And there are wants, as every student of history well knows, which are characteristic of each period. The one that is now passing is critical but earnest; daringly speculative, but keenly scientific. It uncovers the past, and looks at the old with unhesitating criticism. And yet there is a deep devoutness at its heart which has only to be appealed to with the might of a burning enthusiasm, to wake up its best life, and bring it to the world's Redeemer and Lord. Therefore it wants sympathy. He who speaks to it from the highest vantage ground must show that he understands its yearnings, and that he does not despise them. Mr. Spurgeon has given proof of his incapacity or unwillingness for understanding the profound life which once obtained some of its highest expressions in art. He is apt to be narrow and one-sided. He who would put his finger upon the best pulse of our modern life must be broad and many-sided. He must know how to view this great tide of thought and feeling with the rapt passion of a generous friend of humanity, and the confidence that he has a loving testimony to declare from a God who is greater than any sect or party has ever known Him to be. Mr. Spurgeon is one of the last products, and one of the most striking of that bustling, defiant, brusque Puritanism which does its own work, and hardly cares to understand any other.

The Rev. James Baldwin Brown, B.A.,

BRIXTON.

Mr. Baldwin Brown may be fairly regarded as a leader of the more thoughtful and progressive portion of the Congregational body. For five-and-twenty years he has been acknowledged as one of their ablest preachers. He was a pioneer in the paths which have since been trodden by most of the young men who have earnestly observed the requirements of the age through which we are passing. At the distance of time we have indicated, Mr. Brown did not occupy one of the foremost pulpits of his denomination, and must have had a rather serious battle to fight. A new way of stating and enforcing old truths was not welcome, save to the more intelligent and cultured hearers; and there were hundreds of both ministers and laymen who were prepared to do battle fiercely for the forms as well as faith which had once been delivered to the saints.

Mr. Brown had been trained in good Nonconformist traditions and influence; and, with a liberal culture, and a refined and sensitive mind, could hardly fail sooner or later to secure the attention which he deserved. Moreover, he was well "placed" in other respects; his two uncles, Dr. Leifchild and Dr. Raffles, were eminent ministers of his Church. It is known to us that he held these excellent men in very high esteem, and that his sympathies were with them in the leading doctrines which they inculcated with so much unction and eloquence. It may have seemed to many persons that the nephew preached "another Gospel" than that which the uncles so warmly proclaimed; but a fuller acquaintance with his works will suffice to show that in main respects the Gospel was one and the same. It is only on a few points, and these, perhaps, not radical—at least, not in the opinion of the denominational critics

—that Mr. Brown has been at issue with his colleagues in the ministry. In general, he has not been diverse from the accepted teachings of the Congregational Church. Many persons, we believe, who had heard of him as a progressive and liberal theologian have been disappointed upon hearing him assert, with all his characteristic emphasis, the beliefs which had come to be examined and questioned by the forward section of the body. Not a few have turned away disappointed. It had come to be the fashion for young men to carp at the old theologians. Mr. Brown spoke of them with careful reverence. The new style, which was in favour with some hearers, admitted of such epithets as "exploded theories," "effete beliefs," "antiquated notions," when reference was made to the faiths of the forefathers of Nonconformity. Mr. Brown's discourses were not adorned by them, and his style and sentiments, it was at once felt, would not admit them into the pulpit.

To borrow a political designation, Mr. Brown may be spoken of as a Liberal-Conservative. He has a deep affection for much that is old—a reverence which often kindles into passion, for the men and times that are gone,—but a keen and sympathetic desire that Christianity should be found responding, through the ministry and the churches, to the deep wants of the age in which we live. He looks lovingly back upon the times when our fathers did their noble works, and hopefully towards the yet vaster and nobler deeds and speech of the coming period. To use again the language of politicians, he is not a Revolutionist, but an earnest and thoughtful Reformer. We think sometimes he has shown all too little sympathy with some aspects of religious life which are, perhaps, rather daring, and a little inconsiderate, but at least true and devout. He may seem to just a few to have taken on more conservatism as his hair has whitened, and the furrows have deepened in his face; but we know him to be at heart a thorough Liberal, in the largest sympathy with honest inquiry everywhere.

Perhaps the fundamental truth of Mr. Brown's theology, and that which he considered to be more needful

than any other for the heart of this age, is the Fatherhood of God. It must be confessed that a wide difference of opinion prevails at the present time in regard to this doctrine, as compared with a former period. Within the memory of the younger men of middle age, God was not much spoken of in the pulpit as a Father. They heard of Him as such when the Lord's Prayer was used, and it was never denied that He was a Father: but if any inquiry had been made, it would have been found that God was considered to be the proper Father only of the converted. He was the Father of the good; not certainly of the bad. It was a conditional relation of the Supreme, to be claimed thankfully by certain persons who were called the regenerate, but to be stoutly refused to all others. According to this opinion, the Lord's Prayer itself is the petition of the privileged few, and is improperly and even impiously employed by any other persons. It could be nothing short of impiety to employ it as it is commonly done in the services of the Church of England. It is hardly more than eight years ago since Mr. Spurgeon condemned its being taught to children. A large number of parents must have been horrified at hearing that the Saviour's Prayer was to be withheld from the lips of childhood. Of course, the great preacher made special provisoes for the *converted* children: but the fact remained, that God was not to be approached as our Father indiscriminately. The feeling that the Great Eternal God was yet the Father of us all, and the Father of all ages, was pronounced a delusion by the preacher of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. That was something calculated to rouse the passions of religious men; and in some ages which are, we believe, now dawning, the preacher of such tenets would be pronounced a heretic.

Mr. Brown has done his utmost to give prominence to the Divine Fatherhood. One of his early books bore this title. For the services he has rendered to Evangelical Nonconformity upon this one subject, he deserves the gratitude of all intelligent Christians. It is enough to shame us that in this century it could have been needed that the doctrine should be proclaimed with

a fervour which is always used when forgotten truths have to be expounded and affirmed. But all honour be to the men who are not backward but forward when the need is strong. We once heard the secretary of that very Congregational Union, which hardly seemed to favour the young reformer in the old days, preach that same doctrine without reserve, and with all the zeal which Mr. Hannay never fails to import into a subject for which he really cares. It is a rare thing now to meet with a thoughtful Congregational preacher who puts the rectoral before the paternal aspects of the Divine relation towards us. We hear of God on all sides as our Father, whereas we always heard of Him as our Moral Governor. We confess that we are of the number of those who believe that the deepening of this faith in the Divine Fatherhood in the heart of the Church will tend to broaden all its views, and to modify many dogmas which have been received with unsuspecting trust. It may be well to add, that we do not anticipate a revolution, but a gradual reformation of Church tenets and principles.

Mr. Brown reads his sermons, and not always as well as he ought and might. He has a good voice, not of large compass, but of deep tone and rich quality. He is apt to fall into an almost unbroken monotone. His admirers will hardly observe it when he is preaching his best, and very rarely object to it; but it would be possible for him to acquire greater pulpit influence if he could pause more frequently, and gain time to vary the tone of his voice. He will not regard this as a little matter; he is too much concerned for usefulness to despise any criticism which may honestly point to any defects in his pulpit-work; and his friends, to whom the monotone may be half agreeable, are too sensible not to desire the fullest advantage which can accrue from his ministry.

No careful hearer of Mr. Brown can fail to have been impressed with his intense earnestness. The man's face is seamed with it; his eyes burn with its fires; his voice indicates it in every one of its tones. You never lose the impression of it from the first moment of listening

to him. Indeed, there are times when you half require that he should soften the severity of his appeals, and with more gentleness show you the love of the great Father. If this man had been a proclaimer of the sovereignty of God after the fashion of the pulpit of times gone by, he would have been as terrible as any English preacher of this century. He would have been a very Jonathan Edwards. Such a hyper-Calvinist would never have been heard, had he embraced the five points. He would have been a man whose frown would have intimidated his hearers. He speaks in the manner of a prophet. Perhaps in his nature there is more that is akin to the prophetic than to the apostolic elements in Holy Scripture. He is a great believer in the ancient books; and his sympathies are always strongly expressed for the noblest of our Puritan ancestors whose love for the psalmists and the prophets is known to us all. We shall make some quotations amongst others from one of Mr. Brown's books which does not profess to contain sermons, but is avowedly written by him in the sermon style.

The following passages are thrilling and awful in their earnestness. They are full of the burning eloquence of the prophet of Gilead.

"Character is consolidated habit, and habit forms itself by repeated action. Habits are like paths beaten hard and clear by the multitude of light footsteps which go to and fro. The daily restraint or indulgence of the nature, in the business, in the home, in the imagination, which is the inner laboratory of the life, creates the character which, whether it be here or there, settles the destiny. Here or there, I say; it is all one. Death is no juggler to transmute qualities by a touch. The man whose habits or character are a curse to him here, who gives up the effort to rule them, and lets them make havoc of life's higher joys at will, will bear the curse with him through death, and will measure at length all its tremendous meaning in a world where evil is branded base, and skulks and cowers before the universal gaze. Evil in this life may work half detected, half suppressed. It costs too

much profit or pleasure to search too curiously into the ways or habits of the life. But the judgment will reveal it, the sentence will declare it, and the soul can hide under its shelter no more. The sweet morsel will then become everlasting bitterness, and the triumph of life everlasting misery and shame. . . . . Then keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of the life. Keep it in the daily, hourly tempers, habits, musings, and imaginations. I sometimes think that we Protestants are under some disadvantages here. We make so much of sin in the gross, and confess it in general terms so abjectly, that we pass over the minor faults, defects, slips of temper, or conduct, which make so much of the present pain or pleasure of life, and are busily building beneath the surface, like the coral insects, the edifice of the future, shaping thereby the destinies of eternity. The Confessional is a mighty instrument for dealing with these little sins. We have abolished it in stern indignation, and justly. . . . '*If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast it from thee.*' Be stern! be pitiless! The maiming of the moment is nothing, the wealth of the immortal being is all. Let the powers of the world to come enter into and reinforce you. Heir of God, joint heir with Christ, born to a joy, a glory, to which no angel can aspire, hold fast the title of your inheritance; maintain it to the last gasp against world, flesh, and devil; and, if you faint, bleed, or die in the conflict, ring out the shout of an everlasting victory in death.

"Would to God that I could paint to you the retrospect, that I could show to you at a glance, how ages hence these things will appear. Some, it may be, will read these words, who in the young spring-time of their being might make, by wise, strenuous self-discipline and self-culture, life joyous and beautiful through the ages, but they will not. Let the weeds and the flowers grow together as they may; give me my fill of pleasure, they cry. To-morrow, eternity, must look to themselves. Thou fool; thou fool! Oh, the fearful emphasis with which your agonised heart will groan out, Thou fool, when all the fair, joyous things with which

God would have enriched your immortal spirit lie rotting wrecks around you, while the things you loved and clung to, the apples of Sodom, with which the devil cheated you, crumble into bitter ashes in your paralysed hand."

We heard Mr. Brown preach a Merchants' Lecture in the fine old Dutch church in Austin Friars, from the text, "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil," which possessed in a rare degree the qualities of an earnest testimony to the conscience. We have seldom, if ever, listened to more powerful preaching of its kind. Many years ago, when Henry Melvill drew such crowds to hear the Golden Lecture, we heard him preach on "The gift of speech, and its solemn responsibilities," with that intensely earnest manner which was so characteristic of the man. It was enough to make us afraid to speak when the service was over as we walked with a friend along the crowded thoroughfares in the neighbourhood of St. Margaret's Church. We thought of that sermon of seventeen years ago, as we listened to Mr. Brown in the Dutch church. It was a solemn rebuke of the sins which abound in multitudes of lives. It was the kind of sermon which we all need to hear while we fight our conflict in this sinful world. Of a similar nature is the following passage :—

"What are you doing, what are we doing—I address myself as well as you—which shall turn to us as a testimony in that day? A testimony of what? What is the record that shall be read out about us? What hidden things shall the book of remembrance reveal? How much is said and done daily because we love God and must do His will at whatever cost? Many a clean stroke of business is done, no doubt; many a happy speculation; or, perhaps a brilliant trick, or next door to it. Quite right, quite fair, no doubt, as business goes in these days; but not the kind of thing which will turn to you for a testimony when it is read out on high.

"Realise it. Set it before your mind's eye. Beings of angelic truth, purity, charity, all round you; circle beyond circle. And Christ, who lived that life which

it makes us blush to read about, in the midst. And what is there in your life in tune with it which you will hear read out with joy in that great company, which makes you the blessed freeman of that world in which "*the Lamb who was slain*" is King? Once, in a time of dark, sad suffering to the saints, "*they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.*" Now, in a time of security and honour, when Christ's name is written on our exchanges, and His priest is the first subject in the realm, what is it that we are writing in the book of remembrance? What deeds do we leave for recompense at the resurrection of the just? No matter what the world thinks about it, the real question is—What do we think of it ourselves? In the quiet hours when the world is shut out, and its babbling is silent, what do we think of it? There is a sterner, surer judge within, than any that the world can set to weigh us. How stand we before that tribunal? It will prophesy to us how we shall stand before the bar of Christ at last."

Mr. Brown is not only stern and powerful in his denunciations; he can exhibit deep feeling when he utters sympathy with those who are hard pressed in the pilgrimage of life. We have often remarked that there is a tear always waiting to be shed, even when his hardest words are being spoken. He has a true feeling of brotherhood with his kind, and yearns to help them in their struggles, cares, and sorrows. He has a keen perception of the deep woes which oppress the hearts of men, and ever longs to proclaim to them the nearness of help in the great God of pity and love. He burns with indignation at sin, and cannot find words sharp and terrible enough for those who play with iniquity; but for the tempted and the sad he has a warm and kindly message ever from the heart of the infinite God. He is almost in a hurry to get at you, that he may pour into your wounded spirit the oil of joy for consolation and peace. The Christian ministry is with him a matter of great moment. He is not an attitudiniser in a pulpit: it is too solemn a position for him to turn it to any low account of trifling and folly. Whether for rebuke or consolation, He is in earnest.

When treating of the great pity of God for sinful men, he thus spoke in one of his ordinary home sermons :—

"Is this saying too much of the pity and tenderness of God? Why did He endure the sharpness of death? What drew Him from the throne to the cross and to the grave? Was it the articulate, intelligent prayer of a world which was dying, and which knew that He could save it? Alas! the world knew little of its need when its God came to redeem it; it was sunk in the listless energy of despair; conscious only of a dull, dead pain which tormented it, it lay moaning, unable to utter a prayer in the ear of God. Nay, when He came to it, so little did it understand its pain and its needs, it turned on Him and spurned Him. It branded Him with its hate; it stung Him with its scorn; it nailed Him to its cross, moaning still. It was the moaning which drew Him down and nerved Him to endure. His compassion could not bear that dumb cry of anguish, and so He came to help and to save."

What great power of sympathy, and what rapt expression of it, we perceive in the next quotation! He is not a craven worshipper of success, but beholds in the poor toiler along the paths of faithful duty a brother who stands in need of the kindly help of God's ministers.

"Suppose that you never get on. Suppose that in you that manly instinct of getting on is but feebly developed, and the, let us say, womanly instinct of unselfish service and ministry is in force. What then? We cannot all get on. There are those who are too lazy to get on; they are not in question here. But there are those who are too ready to help others on; who are too easy, gentle, sensitive, and kindly to push far ahead in such a world as this. They seem to be always somewhere in the rear, and to blunder somewhat about the road. What of them? There was One, once upon earth, who, like them, did not get on, save towards Calvary, whose soul was so full of His Divine mission to help, to bless, to save, that His bread even sometimes failed.

p. 177.

"Be of good cheer, brother. The best and wisest are

not always in the van. I think that in such an age as this, when the nature needs to be as hard and sharp as steel to get on, there must be heavenly watchers who rain down looks of tender pity, perhaps love, on the beaten, and who think that if they, too, had to run in this race, the rear might be about their place. I am not depreciating the manly instinct which moves a man to get on. God forbid! The world needs it too sternly, and has profited by it too largely for me to do other than honour it and wish it God-speed. I only say, that the womanly instinct that leans to the serener, more unworldly, more unselfish paths, has its use and beauty, which the angels may be cherishing while you may be trampling it down scornfully, as you rush on to the prize. All honour to Martha, abundant honour; but Mary shall have the tribute of my love. While the strong ones anoint for the race or the wrestle, they shall not miss their honour who anoint for the burial, for I read that they who are buried with Christ rise with Him; they who die live; they who lose the world are the crowned of heaven, the white-robed elders of eternity."

Mr. Brown is a devout and earnest reader of history. He watches with keen and anxious eye the footsteps of God in our world. Where other men might see only accident, or something trivial, he perceives the indications of the Divine presence and power. The upheaval of society is not merely the development of human passion, but the out-working of God's great plan with the world. Where others pause, stricken with a feeling of amazement at the daring purposes of men, he adores the awful presence of the Most High. The newspapers do but unfold to him the further chapters in that great history of Time, of which the sacred chroniclers begin the record. For such a mind the conflicts of parties have a different interest from that which they yield to those who are simply allured by the charm of diversion and excitement. He meets God everywhere: not alone in temples of religion, but in halls of commerce; not merely where voices mingle in His worship, but where they may be heard contesting over the gains of the

quickly passing day. In some respects he has the faculty of a seer. The kingdom of God is nigh to his vision always. All principalities and powers are lost in that Divine society. All this is manifest in his sermons, and in every aspect of his public work. This very passing age is the age of ages with him. As a "sentinel, this hour is regal, for he mounts on guard." He cries, "What of the night?" as he meets another sentinel pacing the path which lies along the ramparts of observation and defence. All is to him as sacred and dear, as if upon his careful observation and unbending fidelity the fate of a world depended. Such a man will have a strong hold upon some, while many may seek a less monitory and less earnest teacher. Mr. Brown speaks at high command, and neither fears the scorn nor seeks the favour of those to whom he brings the testimony of the most high God.

The late Rev. E. L. Hull, B.A.,

OF KING'S LYNN.

Mr. Hull's claim to rank in this list of pulpit worthies does not rest upon the fame he attained while living. He filled but a small space in public notice, and was not known to many people beyond the few circles in which, as a Baptist minister, he was called to mingle. King's Lynn is not amongst the least known of the country towns of England, but it is not quite so close to the most frequented pathways of popular life as some are. A man might be very famous there, and yet hardly be known beyond the Wash and the two or three old cathedral cities which are found not far from its borders. And Mr. Hull discharged the duties of his ministry for but a few years, as he died at the age of twenty-nine. His death took place some fifteen years ago. That is long enough to have passed into forgetfulness, save with the few who keep green memories of the "loved and lost" for evermore. There are thousands of persons who never heard the name of Edward Luscombe Hull while he was living, but who number it now among the treasured names of mind and heart. He has long been recognised by very high authorities as worthy to rank among the ablest and most impressive preachers of our time. His gifts were of the rarest order, and for his age had obtained unusual culture. It is very difficult to imagine that the thoughtful and often very comprehensive views of truth, or estimates of character, which we meet with in his discourses, could have been advanced by so young a man. Whatever may have been the outer circumstances of Mr. Hull's brief career, it is evident that he must have had an inner experience of the most profound nature. His sermons are not of the kind which can be produced by considerable acquaintance

with Biblical learning or general literature, even though of the highest order. They are not the reproductions in a clear and fervid style of the best thoughts of other men. He must have been familiar, and closely so, with some of the best writers on theological matters; but he must have had recourse to other and deeper fountains of inspiration than they could supply. No man could preach such sermons as he preached without having an intimate knowledge of human life and character. He must have looked into the abysses of being, and have felt the solemnity of life. He knew and understood the Bible deeply; but he understood it because he knew still better what was in his own heart. He had "communed with himself." To him the older stories, and songs, and prophecies, and the newer tale of the life of Jesus, and the letters of apostles, spake not of far-away things with which we only have to deal as history, and the records of human thought and feeling in bygone ages; they opened up to his heart the testimony of God with respect to the needs and yearnings of the present passing hour. The old Book was dear to him, because it recognises and responds to the common life of man everywhere and in all ages. It was an ever-fresh book —a daily revelation from heaven to his heart, which no amount of theological learning could enable him to understand apart from that spiritual sympathy and intelligence which must be brought to its consideration. It was as fresh as the new-blown rose, and was bathed in the dews of heaven, fragrant and beautiful with the excellency and love of God.

We attribute to Mr. Hull's intensely loving and vital appreciation of Scripture much of the power which we observe in his discourses. Hence it is that they follow no examples, and imitate no models. Thay are inspired with the preacher's own true feeling and life. We are never reminded of the theological class-room, nor confronted with the opinions of ancient Fathers and other respectable authorities, when we yearn for such teaching as may warm our hearts while it enlightens our minds. The sermon is never a disquisition; it is more a poem. This man may have read and admired some of those

great writers of sermons, who are held as the kings of the sermon-style; but he was a king himself, and he had in the legitimate sense a style of his own. His keen and yet solid intelligence would have prevented him from speaking scornfully of certain great masters of composition; but he had a higher conception of the real grandeur of his work than to suppose that it could receive its complete direction from the best of models. He thought of Scripture not so much as a collection of ancient treatises, but as a revelation of the Divine estimate of life, and a testimony of God's will to human hearts. As he himself said in one of his historical discourses, "The Old Testament narratives are a revelation of the unchanging order of the government of God. Men frequently read those old histories as records of certain wonderful events in which God departed from the order of His government; and then the Old Testament becomes a book of wonders, having no connection with the life of to-day. But if we look at it as revealing the manner in which God acts through all ages, those narratives will explain to us facts in life and the world, which we want to understand now." He who should thus read his Bible would be sure to communicate to men a deep and vivid feeling of sympathy with its revelations. To ask such a preacher to argue with you upon theological subjects, is to tempt him to forego his highest labour, that he may take up the feeble discussions about which the fiercest passions of men have been vainly employed. It is no disparagement of theology to write thus; we reverence and admire the patient toil and careful thought of holy and earnest men; but it is not a theological disquisition which hearers need when they come to church on Sunday morning. They come to worship the great Father from whom the life has probably wandered; they yearn for His pity, and implore His help. They wait to be taught His will, to be shown His ways, and to be helped to love Him as He deserves to be loved. Such preachers as have thus recognised their duty and usefulness to their fellow-men, have been able to illustrate the life of to-day by the life of thousands of years ago, and to put that old life by the

side of what is now being lived. That *fetishism* which has converted the Bible into a kind of god, thus receives its just rebuke, while it really becomes a more precious oracle of Divine wisdom.

The following passage will sustain the opinion we have expressed concerning Mr. Hull's powers in dealing with Scripture events. It occurs while he is treating of the conduct of Aaron and the children of Israel when Moses was absent from them:—

"Their leaders had disappeared. Accustomed as they had been to live in subjection, they had become alarmed at his absence, and needed some man to rule them. Then the slumbering evil tendencies of their hearts awoke, and, forgetting all that they owed to Moses, they spoke of him in terms of contemptuous unthankfulness: 'As for this man Moses, we know not what has become of him.' The transition from ingratitude to darker sin is rapid and easy. These people having forgotten their greatest friend, soon forgot their God. In Egypt they had seen calves worshipped as the symbol of the secret god in nature, in whom the Egyptians believed. And in their deep degradation, disbelieving in the presence of the Invisible, craving for some visible thing on which they might bestow their reverence, and to which they might yield their submission, they created a calf of gold; and there the miserable, thankless race, only just redeemed from the iron bondage of Pharaoh, bent before it with the adoring cry, 'These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.' But it may be said, perhaps, that Aaron's conduct formed some excuse for this sin. . . . Had he stood firm, he might have repelled the people. At all events, he had no right to be afraid, standing in such a position as his, and should have died rather than yield. His excuse to Moses, 'I cast the gold into the fire, and there came out a calf,' betrays a guilty conscience trying to hide its cowardice; and this act of a man, otherwise good and honoured, is a striking proof that, when the priests of the people act through fear, for expediency's sake, and not from a conviction of eternal right, what-

ever be the result, they fall into slavery to popular ideas. But yet the fact that the people had risen to compel his obedience proves that his yielding does not lessen the enormity of their sin—the thing was demanded by them. Let us now bring together all the circumstances of this deed, and we shall see how it expresses in one act the essential spirit of all their evil. We must remember that it was only three months since they had stood by the Red Sea, and seen its waves roll over the pride of Pharaoh, and had shouted in the gladness of the free. Every day since that time God's love had followed them. His mercy every morning sent the manna from heaven. His loving-kindness caused the rock to gush with water. Every night His smile lit the cloudy pillar into a glory that shone, and that pillar was at that moment hovering over them in the heavens. And yet these men virtually said, bowing before the golden god, 'We have forgotten Him. All that mercy is nothing. All His claims on us are gone. We will make gods for ourselves. That calf brought us out of the land of Egypt.' Is it not evident that in that act of idol worship they showed all the degradation, and unthankfulness, and evil of their hearts? Still further, observe where they were. Above them rose the grim mountain that only a few days previously had shaken with thunder, on which had rested a brightness no eye could bear, and from which the loud, long, shattering peal of the trumpet had sounded; and in the deep hush following its terrific blast they had heard the still, clear voice of the Infinite One saying, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.' The cloud was still up in those awful heights, and the glory of the Lord still resting there, while below stood the mockery of a golden god, and Israel worshipping it in defiance alike of the law and the thunder, and the love of Jehovah. I say again, is it not obvious that the source of that depravity which perpetually tried their leader was revealed in that act of sin?"

But a brief acquaintance with Mr. Hull's sermons is necessary to imbue the reader with a feeling of his breadth of view when he deals with such subjects of

Scriptural interest as may fairly lead to differences of opinion among good men. A mind of this nature cannot be bound by the restrictions of dogmatic theology. It claims the right to think for itself. We should all of us withhold our respect from a man of so much ability who would abnegate the high prerogatives of free inquiry. It is not necessary to read more than one sermon to find that this preacher thinks out for himself with devout independence any subject which he undertakes to consider. The movements of his mind as they are seen in his sermons are those of a free spirit, unfettered by the dictation or interference of those thinkers who arrogate to themselves the right of laying down the conclusions to which others shall come as well as themselves. If such a thinker came to opposite conclusions from your own, you would still acknowledge that he had come to them with a free exercise of the fullest powers of mind and spirit. He does not hold a brief for any Church system, nor profess to plead on behalf of any creed in Christendom. If he mentions the Apostles' Creed with respect, you know that he would still dare to say that "we have one Master, even Christ, and that all we are brethren."

It is instructive to observe that those minds alone have left a profound impression upon mankind which had the bravery to think for themselves. Originality (for want of a better word equally simple) and individuality never fail to affect men. Sooner or later they yield to these qualities a fair amount of reverent remembrance. They had no small share in attracting and retaining the notice which was accorded to Dr. Newman's remarkable leadership of the Oxford Revival. The man thought for himself, even when he was found in accord with the great thinkers and theologians of bygone times. Men will bow down in teachableness before their fellow when he comes to bring to them the stores of personal and earnest thought. It is quite probable that had Mr. Hull's life been prolonged until our day he would have been found ready to pay respect to those tendencies of thought which are identified with the sentiments of the broad school of theological opinion.

We do not imply by these words that he would ever have ceased to be deeply and lovingly evangelical in his presentation of the Divine love to his hearers. He could never have become a cold intellectualist.

There were occasions when the preacher showed this freedom of mind as he dealt with those interpretations of Scripture which do not involve great questions of a doctrinal nature. To our mind he was ingenious and painstaking to the greatest extent in his treatment of the Sacred writings. He had the faculty of intuition to a remarkable degree; but intuition is associated, in most instances, with resolute and often painful investigation. It is not the privilege of the indolent; it is the highest possession of the man who otherwise works and thinks with all his might. All these sermons indicate patient, resolute, diligent toil. The preacher was enthusiastic in his work; and, with respect to most of his sermons, one might have said that he "was straitened until they were delivered."

We have an illustration of this in his sermon on "The Individuality of Christian Life," founded upon our Lord's answer to Peter's inquiry concerning John. The introduction is a fine instance of a beautiful perception of the nature of Christian life. We are reminded of Robertson.

"It is not easy to determine with any certainty the spirit in which that question was asked, nor the meaning of the answer received. Most probably the question sprang from earnest anxiety regarding John's destiny. It may even be that Peter, having at length learned the glory of sharing the Saviour's cross, was concerned lest his brother disciple should not have the honour of following so closely in his Master's suffering as himself. Mingled with that would be the anxious feeling which men of Peter's ardent and unselfish nature ever cherish, regarding the future of a friend. . . . In this spirit of unselfish devotion—rising even to restless curiosity regarding the Divine plan—it probably was, that gazing on the beloved disciple, Peter forgot the picture of his own martyrdom in his solicitude for John.

"Again, it is not easy to explain with any feeling of certainty the meaning of Christ's reply. Some have thought that the expression, 'Tarry till I come,' referred to the coming of Christ to John at the moment of death. This explanation, however, appears to exhaust the words of all their meaning. Christ would come as truly to Peter in the agony of his martyrdom as to John dying calmly in peaceful old age, and to read the words then, 'If I will that he tarry till he die,' reduces an obscure saying of Christ to a self-evident fact. We may be quite sure that no such answer as this would have been given to the anxious inquiry of Peter. On the contrary, 'if I will,' while a reproof to his anxiety, contained at the same time a reply to his question, and threw light on the destiny of John. Again, it has been said, and I think truly, that the coming for which he was to wait must have referred to the time when Jerusalem should fall, and the old economy be shaken and pass away. Then Christ would come invisibly in power and great glory; then Christianity, for the first time, would begin its world-wide supremacy. And that day of the manifestation of Christ John beheld, and in his lonely banishment, saw visions of Christ's future dominion. Taking the question and its answers in that sense, the point I wish to bring out is the wide difference it revealed in the destinies of the two apostles. To the anxious Peter, Christ declared that John's course was to be different from his own. By the words 'What is that to thee?' He emphatically indicated a distinction, implying by them that he should go his own way, and leave his brother's cause in His hands. The one was to labour, the other to wait. The one was to preach the Gospel through the world, and be summoned to heaven by the sufferings of martyrdom; the other was to watch in long banishment the coming again of the unseen Saviour, when the old economy should fall, and then in peaceful old age to pass to the eternal home. All this marked difference of destiny by which they were each to follow the Saviour is contained in the reply, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?'"

It would not be fair to Mr. Hull to come to a severe judgment with regard to his sermons as a whole, as they were not prepared with the idea that they would ever be read by the public. As a rule, the introductions are the most carefully prepared portions as we have them in these volumes. They are less complete in thought, less perfect in expression, as they approach the close. If it was Mr. Hull's habit to wax warm, and become more impressive as he uttered his last words to his hearers, we have but slight indication of it here. We are not referring to what is commonly termed the peroration, but to that perfectly natural mode in which a speaker seeks to intensify and concentrate the full force of all his energy when he is aiming at the good of his hearers. We are too thankful to obtain the sermons as they are to wish to advert with more care to any defects which may be observed. They are marvellously beautiful sermons, stamped with the living earnestness of the preacher.

Many readers will observe the course which Mr. Hull took with the apparent contradictions of doctrine and faith which we meet with in the necessary statements of theological truth. He harmonises them, not by lessening the vigour and point of both the statements which are in apparent contradiction, but by admitting the truth of both, and claiming that they both affirm a still deeper truth to which they are equally related. This he does in common with Robertson. We do not derogate from the claims which the younger preacher so fully substantiates, when we say that it is quite probable that Mr. Hull received the suggestion from Mr. Robertson's sermons. The influence of Robertson is often apparent in the sermons of Mr. Hull. There must have been very strong sympathy between them. There is more of Robertson visible in Hull than of Wordsworth in Tennyson. In the case neither of poet nor preacher would the one have been what he was unless the other had lived before him. There are differences which will immediately be perceived. Many would say that the tone of the Baptist preacher is more evangelical than that of the clergyman; Mr. Hull touches certain

aspects of experience which obtain for him another audience than that which is given to Mr. Robertson. It is equally true to say this of the latter. There is somewhat more of the intuitive power of real genius in Robertson, and unquestionably, what with the culture of Oxford, and the longer career, he had acquired by intense cultivation the exquisite faculty of expressing his best thoughts in a terse, clear, and forcible way, which Mr. Hull might have emulated had his life been prolonged. The delicate physical organisation which both of them must have possessed, combined with a mental vividness and clearness of perception which was so strikingly similar, would always have induced a sympathy of great tenderness and reality. We should be disposed to affirm that while Mr. Robertson gave evidence of by far the greater intensity of logical grasp and energy, Mr. Hull was before him in fervour and freedom of fancy. We have many indications that Mr. Hull had some difficulty in repressing the ardent and daring imagination which was ever ready to soar towards realms which are rarely approached by even thoughtful men. We frequently meet with passages of exceeding beauty and vigour, such as could alone be inspired by poetic genius. The following brief extracts will illustrate our words :—

"We stand in blind, bewildered grief before the veil of adversity, while, had we the keen, clear eye of faith in the spiritual world which surrounds us, we should be able, in quiet blessedness, to trace the glorious pattern which sorrow is weaving for us."

"All longings to realise the Father, all prayer for a present sense of the invisible, all passionate outcries for more light, wrung from us by the dark mysteries of failure and sorrow, are the aspirations of the heavenly nature within us yearning for the image of the Lord."

"Regarding Christ simply as a man, could His idea of redeeming the world have been inspired by the spirit of His age ? So strong was that spirit against Him that, in its stormy outbreak, His life went down."

"Before the magnificence of royalty, and the splendour of the Cæsarean nobility, he (Paul) had stood

unappalled under the power of a faith that, grasping eternity, looked on earthly grandeur as the fading shows of a fading world."

"Christ passed into darkness with one grand appeal to the Father. Had He not risen, His whole doctrine would have become meaningless—His whole life a stupendous riddle. Human life would have become darker than before. The light of His life having gleamed and gone, would have left a deeper gloom on the world, just as the lightning-flash in the night leaves behind it a denser darkness."

"His apparent defeat was really His mightiest victory—the grandest apparent failure the world ever witnessed was changed to the noblest conquest, when He rose from the tomb, and 'led captivity captive.'"

Upon the Departure of Christ he wrote:—"The old sceneries of Galilee, with their lakes and hills, had caught a heavenly light from the revelation given by the Saviour that God was a Father, and life His service, and that there was an eternal home beyond. But over this new world a cloud of desolation was sweeping downwards in the chilling thought that He the Friend and Brother was going, and that they would be left alone amid a wild and mocking race, who cared not for them, and had crucified their Lord."

"That is a poor and lifeless Christianity which is built only on a creed. We need a Divine person as our fellow. That is not the highest Christianity which rests at the cross. We need a living person to win and weave around Himself the holy affections of the soul. When that is so, then and then only do faith, and hope, and love bloom into their glorious maturity."

The following passage is full of the life-like vividness and vigour of the style of Robertson. It will suggest comparison with many portions of his sermons:—

"Men work under human approbation. This is often an undetected power. It is supremely hard to work in desolate solitude—hard, indeed, to work for the good of men, and receive in return persecution and scorn. The thundering acclamation of the people is an inspiring, all-rousing power. But there was little of this in

Christ's life. His popularity soon died away. At one time He was followed by many, but when He spake of the cross to be borne, the many left Him. Amid the hosannas of the people who hoped to crown Him as an earthly King, He stopped to weep over doomed Jerusalem! In that solitary, unpopular life what could have made Him so earnest but the conviction that by every step He was fulfilling a commission from the Father?"

There is apparent in every page of Mr. Hull's sermons that deep sympathy with man, that "enthusiasm of humanity" which will be found to underlie all effective preaching. Without this we could never have had the fervent and beautiful words which ever meet us as we read on and on. Not seldom are we reminded of one other quality in which he resembles Robertson. There is a deep undertone of sadness, a pathetic, pensive refrain, which ever breaks from his spirit upon ours. Occasionally this slightly frets the heart, and while it sends it to God, leaves an uncomfortable, and, as we cannot help thinking, unfair impression as to the strength and value of human blessings. Shades of melancholy are not so common in Mr. Hull's pages as in Robertson's. But they are not absent. Indeed, how could they be, since he had so tender and sensitive a nature? Under all circumstances there was a triumphant and glorious victory expressed over whatever was felt to be dark and sad. His heart was always deeply replenished from the fountains of Divine consolation.

There was much of the prophetic earnestness in him. He came to us as a spirit of light and life from the world on high, and shed upon the minds he influenced during his brief day of life the holy balm of heavenly grace. He *saw* vividly and quickly what it took some men long to see. In words as of living fire he told us what he saw and felt; and then passed beyond the veil to Him from whose bright presence he came. The wear and tear, the feverish agony, and the weary toil of our existence was known to him, though the day was short during which he did his work. He gained a place

amongst us, and a fame of lasting excellence. His words abide for ever, full of strength and grace, to help and comfort us in our strife and care. Denied in life the popularity which his compeers have received, and known to but few, he now obtains kindly and loving remembrance from thousands of grateful hearts. For the quickening and inspiration of men he preaches still. We can hardly help asking to what high mental and spiritual stature he would have attained had he continued with us to this time. Much theological discussion and speculation has been rife since he left us, in the autumn of 1862. The "thoughts of many hearts have been revealed." Daring questions have been flung into the arena of religious inquiry. The person and work of the Christ have been considered and pronounced upon; the origin and claims of Holy Scripture have been fearlessly discussed by men of almost every school of thought; the position and authority of the Christian preacher have been now and then ruthlessly criticised. The new sentiment was beginning to express itself before Mr. Hull's premature departure. He would have encountered all this with characteristic bravery and spirit; and many of his sermons give us full preparation for the conflict as it is still being waged. They touch chords in our mysterious nature which will ever respond to the skilful handling of Divine musicians. The souls of men are open to the appeal which issues from a heart that has fellowship with their deepest wants and sorrows. Such a heart was the divine possession of Edward Luscombe Hull.

The Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A.,

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN; INCUMBENT OF YORK-STREET CHAPEL, ST. JAMES'S.

In these *critiques* we are not concerned with the differences of doctrine or ritual obtaining in the Church of England, any more than with those which in too many instances isolate one branch of the still wider Church of Christ from another. Whatever references are made to such distinctions must be understood to arise from necessity, or for the sake of convenience. It is not because of doctrinal preference but rather from a deep feeling of admiration for his great ability, and also a knowledge of his unquestionable influence, that we have resolved to make the preaching of Mr. Stopford Brooke the subject of this paper.

It was observed, a few years since, by the ablest of our weekly contemporaries, that the Broad Church had yet to carry out the high purpose of giving to the people an enthusiastic and effective exhibition of its leading principles and sentiments in the way of popular preaching. It had able and even powerful exponents in the press, and eminent divines (as, for instance, Mr. Maurice and Dean Stanley) in the pulpit, but none, since the days of Frederick Robertson, had really appealed to and laid hold of the popular heart. No one at that time approached the ideal of the writer's mind so much as the Rev. H. R. Haweis, of St. James's Chapel, Westmoreland-street. We have not had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Haweis; but, from an acquaintance with his published sermons, we have no hesitation in placing Mr. Brooke's present achievements in a higher place than Mr. Haweis'. Mr. Haweis has shown in his very

able review of Mr. Ward Beecher's preaching, and in his own sermon upon the subject of preaching, that he has a correct idea of the popular needs and tastes. He has told us that a few years since he boldly threw aside his manuscript, and amid much difficulty took to extempore preaching. There is no doubt that he has won success in his brave attempt; but we fear that he has passed a little too far beyond the limits of extempore preaching. He is apt to run wild with his own fancies and thoughts. If they were expressed on paper in the cool quiet of a study they would undoubtedly lack not a little of the dash and brusqueness of free speech; but they would, we believe, be a worthier expression of the best thoughts of a very able and earnest man. It is not every ardent and polished extempore speaker who possesses the extraordinary power which is owned by Mr. Beecher, of combining with the intense forethought of the study the best ideas and images which come to him in the presence of a congregation. If Mr. Haweis will not cast away his compass and chart so defiantly he may reach a haven of success of which he has not dreamt.

Mr. Stopford Brooke was unknown to the world of literature and sermon-hearers when his name was announced as the author of the "Life and Letters of the Rev. F. W. Robertson," in 1865. We were then made aware that he had been Chaplain to the British Embassy at Berlin. It was felt by many that a man who had formed so correct an estimate of, and cherished so devout an affection for the most remarkable preacher of modern times, must himself have high claims upon all those who keep a sacred shrine in their hearts for Mr. Robertson. The fact that he had shown himself to be so able and discriminating a biographer of that great man would lead the public to read his sermons when they were published in 1869. It was a question full of interest for many readers how far the influence of Robertson had moulded his own preaching. We cannot but avow our belief that there are abundant traces of that remarkable power. The *form* of Mr. Brooke's sermons is by no means that of Robertson's.

We miss that very peculiar, and in many respects characteristic and admirable mode of arrangement, which is familiar to all who know those extraordinary sermons. We do not meet with those wonderful and awful impressions of what that agonising and unearthly spirit saw in its solemn wanderings up the hills of holiest contemplation or down amongst the lonely vales of sad and sharp experience. As generations have been, we can only expect to meet with such men now and then in a century. The nature of Mr. Brooke's pulpit preparation would hardly enable him to take those penetrating views of a subject which the prophet of Trinity Chapel was accustomed to take of the themes which engaged his thoughts. Mr. Robertson cannot be called an extempore preacher, but his mode of sermon-preparation helped him to secure many of its advantages. It is nothing to the point to urge, as some may do, that the profoundest thoughts upon Scripture, and the most inspiring visions of religious truth, have been found in books which have been written in a quiet room, remote from the influence of enraptured hearers or readers. The preparation of a manuscript sermon, which has to be read next Sunday morning to a congregation, is a very different thing from the writing of a chapter of a book which will come under your eye again and again before it reaches the public. In the one case you are writing for readers; in the other for hearers. That man must be insensible to the forces which abound in the atmosphere of a pulpit who does not perceive the difference. Robertson, whatever his preparation had been, however full and perfect, could dash out beyond the lines of previous intention, and by that means add wonderful power, we should imagine, to the sermon which had been very carefully considered. But we do perceive in Mr. Brooke's style much of that clear discernment of his subject, that faculty for detecting the related importance of modern life to world-old principles—indeed, that vigorous grasp of principles themselves as distinct from temporary rules, and that skilful and artistic power of definition, which all Mr. Robertson's students have acknowledged as his distinguishing qualities.

Not long since we were conversing somewhat earnestly with a good and honest lawyer in a country town upon many subjects of interest in the religious world of to-day. Our friend remarked, with some severity of criticism, upon Mr. Stopford Brooke, and his last volume of sermons. A defence of Mr. Brooke's style of thought and mode of expression was at the time inconvenient, and would have been useless. We knew our friend's tastes; he belongs to the devoutest sect of Evangelicals. Having ascertained that he had only seen the second volume of sermons, "Christ in Modern Life," we earnestly advised him to read the first volume if he really wished to become acquainted with Mr. Brooke's truest style. We are bold to say that the first volume is a finer evidence of his power to affect the human heart than the second. We know that many will give the palm to the second, as treating with singular skill of many questions of profound importance in the true spirit of a philosopher and poet; but we confess that we find in the earlier volume an influence and a tone which we miss in the latter. The first was a volume of *sermons*, the last was a volume of essays. There are many who would hear them with unalloyed delight; but there are more who would find in the first a rich and satisfying spiritual feast. We think Mr. Brooke has lowered the conception of the true object and proper spirit of preaching by adopting the methods of the second volume. We now ask him to give us another series conceived in the old spirit, and full of the same power for widest and highest usefulness. He is marked as a preacher by undoubted intellectual force, and is qualified to deal with all the subtle and difficult problems which are being suggested by the restless and daring criticism of our time; but we may remind him that his largest success is attained in dealing with those ever-present and pressing questions which are rising in all human breasts, which the preacher of truth in every age encounters, and which it is his highest mission to answer out of the fulness of his own heart. Whenever Mr. Brooke touches those themes with which we are all familiar, he is a great teacher and helper. Then he

speaks to us upon subjects which are common to the wants and woes by which we are all more or less oppressed. He then looks at the inward and vital experience of our hearts. He becomes what our fathers were always delighted to acknowledge as the "experimental preacher." He lays hold of the commonest and also deepest life of men, sounding its depths, exploring and explaining its mysteries, listening with attentive and reverent ear for its solemn inquiries, and hailing with thankful joy its holy and loving aspirations. We had rather hear him when he speaks to us as man with men, than as he adopts the tone and style of the Christian philosopher, seeking to thread his way for us into the mysteries which mingle with the thought and speech of the passing hour. We had rather hear him discourse on Peter's sin and sorrow, and on David's defeats and triumphs, than upon the profound doctrines which concern the Trinity or the immortality of the soul. How finely he portrays the condition of Peter on the betrayal night, and how much in the true manner of Robertson does he derive lessons of value for us all!

"Have you ever seen a man who, having nerved himself for days for some great stroke in life, is suddenly betrayed into striking at the wrong time—too soon for success, or too late for honour? He has put all the concentrated passion of his heart into one blow at the wrong time, and the blow exhausts him utterly. He has no power left. He is thenceforth the prey of circumstances.

"Strike as hard as you like at the right time, and everything assists you. The blow, instead of diminishing, redoubles your force; success is parent of success. Strike at the wrong time, or in the wrong manner (and Peter's impetuosity and self-conceit were sure to lead him wrong), and all the virtue goes out of you; you fail, and failure gives birth to failure; your chance is lost, and you become fearful, unbelieving, the victim, for the moment, of any dishonour which may cross your path. So it was with Peter. As high as had been the excitement, so entire now was the exhaustion in the reaction. Fear came in upon him; he turned and fled;

and oh! miserable, the brave man became a coward, and the loyal friend a base deserter."

Such teaching as that will help us all, no matter whether we be peasants or statesmen; nor whether accustomed to the propositions of learned reasoners, or the simple inquiries of poor men. A sermon of that nature might be preached with large profit in the little village church to farmers and cottagers, as well as in the West-end chapel to Members of Parliament, and high-born dwellers in palatial homes.

The next passage we quote will illustrate Mr. Brooke's exquisite mastery over those subtle forces which enable a preacher to call up before his hearers the scenes which have been familiar to the life that has gone by for him as for others. We know that he can use the brush as well as the pen. He is a painter. He idealises life and truth with touching and beautiful skill. He can sketch, in a picturesque way, the incidents of any narrative subject which is under his treatment. It is his manner and choice to speak thus. These sketches are not thrown off with the marvellous brilliancy and ease with which some have been able to do it; but you have the polished and perfect art of the careful and genuine interpreter of what he sees. He remarked himself, in his preface to the first edition of the "Life and Letters," that "Even Robertson's slight sketches of an idea, traced perhaps in a single sentence, contain the materials for a finished composition. If he is not a creator, he is evidently a lucid interpreter of thought. It is in this power of apt, logical, and striking expression that the chief *literary* interest of his writings consists." We may not have to acknowledge precisely the same power in his own sermons; but the style and manner are sometimes very charming and impressive. Peter was to him a real man, with the passions and faculties of a man. Only so can the Scripture aid such a preacher as Mr. Brooke in helping and blessing others. The *human-ness*, so to speak, of the "oracles of God," is an all-pervasive and sanctifying element, without which they would be devoid of that material power which gives them their blessed usefulness for human spirits. The old fashion

of seeing in every line of Holy Scripture, whatever the subject might be, a Divine lesson for devout minds, is realised in a different form, and with far more salutary results. The whole of its teaching is felt to be sublime, but profitable for correction and instruction in righteousness.

"'Immediately the cock crew. *Then* Peter remembered the word of the Lord.' Make the meaning of this your own. Much of the memory of the past is only waked by coming into contact with those things with which the past has been associated. See once more a river by which you walked in boyhood; hear a song which charmed your youth, and all the past rises from its grave and lives again.

"Blessed is he whose life has been pure, on whom the stars smile with the same smile with which they greeted his boyhood; for whom the sea hides no dark memories; in whose ear music is always sweet; who can revisit after years the haunts of the past, and no ghastly phantom come to bring back the exiled memory of guilt to chill his blood and sere his brain.

"For there is nothing really dead in this world. You have buried your sin, but it is only buried as the hurried murderer buries the corpse of his victim, with a thin layer of light sand. You pass it by, and inadvertently tread upon the grave. A skeleton arm starts up, and points to heaven and to you.

"There is nothing really forgotten. One touch, one sound, one sight, the murmur of a stream, a breaking wave, the sound of a church bell, the barking of a dog heard in the still evening from a hill; a green path in a wood, with the sunlight glinting on it; the way of the moon upon the waters—may, at certain moments, turn the heart to stone, and fill life with a concentrated agony of remorse. 'Immediately the cock crew. *Then* Peter remembered the word of the Lord; and he went out and wept bitterly.'"

And if we put together with some connection his further thoughts upon this same subject, it will still be felt that his power is that of a master of the art of understanding human life, and expressing his concep-

tions of its hidden significance with exquisite beauty and grace.

"Bitter tears they were; but they made him a new man. It was the moment of Peter's true conversion. . . . He passed in those awful tears from the state of childhood to the state of manhood. . . . Till those tears or their equivalent come on us, we are not yet men, but children. Life has not opened to us its terrible but dignifying secrets. We have not yet trodden the inner shrine, the portal of which is kept by sacred sorrow.

"A new life was possible to him; he might yet be counted worthy to die for his Master, and so it was. None was so changed as he. His courage never faltered, his voice never again denied his Lord. His brave words still excite us as we hear them spoken before the Sanhedrim. He testified before kings; he died the martyr of the truth.

"O brethren, it should be so with us. When the pain of drear conviction of a lost life or a sinful heart is come upon you, do not go out with Judas into the night of despair; go out with Peter into the chill dawning, with Christ's look of reproachful love within your heart."

There is no apology for staying away from church when men can hear such words of living beauty as these. They are not *musty* with the damp of ancient theologies hidden away in the dark places of an enfeebled religionism; they are full of the energy and vivacity of life.

Although Mr. Brooke may restrain the play of deep emotions with the habit of a cultured and high-mannered gentleman, there are times when it will have way. That most unique spirit which for a brief day thought and lived amongst us, whose history so far as seen and known, Mr. Brooke has so interestingly revealed in the "Life and Letters," showed more passion than it is given to very few to possess, and still fewer to exhibit. The body, which so thickly veils most men's spirits, hardly seemed more than a gossamer web in the case of Mr. Robertson, which floated easily in the softest

zephyr, and almost parted asunder when the breezes began to blow. It was a spirit-life, delicate and beautiful to an unusual extent. That heart was seen in its pulsations through the transparent vase in which it was carried about from day to day. Mr. Brooke is a stronger man physically than the subject of his excellent memoirs. But passion now and then bursts forth in utterances which have all the grandeur of Divine emotion in them. No tongue could speak with such feeling unless the heart had entered deeply into the meaning of human life. Some time the preacher must have wandered along the shores of being, and watched with intent and sorrowful sympathy the swaying to and fro of that great ocean, life. Else, how could he have uttered the following ?—

"There are times when a man feels that all real life is over for ever; when he has seen every costly argosy of hope sink like lead in the dark waters of the past; when the future stretches before him a barren plain of dreary sea, on which a fiery sun is burning.

"There are times when another has at last felt that all the past has been unutterable folly and darker sin. He looks back upon his youth, and knows that never, never more 'the freshness of his early inspiration' can return. The pure breeze of an innocent morning was once about his way; he hides his head now from the fiery simoom of remorse in the desert of his guilty life. It is the conscience's valley of the shadow of death.

"There are times, too, even in youth, when, by a single blow, all the odour and colour have been taken out of living; when the treachery of lover or friend has made everything in existence taste badly afterwards; and we, tortured and wrung with the bitterest of bitternesses, say in our blindness that all is evil and not good. It is the heart's valley of the shadow of death."

Ofttimes Mr. Brooke's mind is warmed with a glowing vision which the heart has received of some precious truth of life and being. He is strong in the gift of impressiveness, and knows how to touch the human spirit in its tenderest needs; but he can rouse and animate it with bright and cheering truth. It would

be a frequent accusation against him on the part of certain theologians that he exalts human nature too much. Without pronouncing dictatorially upon the merits or demerits of his doctrinal views upon this or any other point, we may avow the belief that much of the success with which he gains acceptance with men's hearts is to be traced to his direct and earnest appeal to that which is noblest and best in them. He does not demolish them as with a sledge-hammer, casting them to the dust at his feet. He takes them by the hand, charges them to look at their own high-born destiny, to dare to look even upon the face of God, to speak to Him as a Father, and to claim the privileges of sonship. To Mr. Brooke the whole world of nature is replete with beauty and glory. The wonder and the splendour of the world have been seen and felt by him, and it is the Father's world, not the production of a mere *Opifex Maximus*. As he says—

"Celestial messages and grace should flow to us through every sight and sound which touches and exalts the heart. Alone with nature in her sublimity and tenderness, standing on the highland moor, the wind your sole companion as it races over the heather, reaching at last the Alpine ridge with the silent world of peaks below, looking up into the purple depths of night upon the solitary sea, let the stillness creep into your heart and make you conscious of your God; let prayer rush to the lips, not the prayer which is petition, but that which is communion."

Mr. Brooke sees in the human heart the possibilities of goodness, and more, the certainty of it. He is, therefore, the preacher of hope, not despair. He more than "faintly trusts the larger hope." That which the Laureate, with a keen perception of the workings of thought and sentiment in our time, expressed with so much fine feeling and beautiful fancy, has become the unreserved trust of Mr. Brooke's heart. He boldly says—"The doctrine of 'total depravity' was unknown to Christ. Everywhere He believed not in the vileness, but in the greatness, of the human soul; and He called forth in men by this trust in them a conviction of their

immortality, a longing for a nobler life, a sense of their degradation and death as long as they sinned, a conviction of the glory and beauty of holiness. He saw in the publican, whom all men shunned, the germ of an honest life. He believed in it, and it grew and bloomed into spiritual beauty. He saw in the fallen woman, whom the proud Pharisee thought had defiled his house, a spark of the Divine love. He believed in it, and it was quickened into a holy flame." A belief like this is so fully characteristic of Mr. Brooke's preaching that we cannot consider it apart from a reference to its important bearing upon the influence of his sermons. Many listen gladly because of it. And none can surely deny that God makes this appeal to that within us which retains traces of His own goodness and love. It may sound strange as coming from the pulpit of a Church which has still a creed of the Calvinistic shape, to hear the following sentiments:—

"That would be miserable, insufferable doctrine, if the education of these outcasts (those who are so wicked and wretched here that all men shrink from them in dismay and hopelessness; who do not seem to be born for anything but to be examples of evil; who have not a chance given them from birth to death), if their education 'began and ended' here; but if it goes on from state to state, the doctrine has a wild gleam of comfort in it. For I can fancy the marvellous change, the rush of softening tears, the penitence-bringing tenderness which might come to some poor, wicked, ruined criminal when it was given to him to know, in the world to come, that his evil life had stirred a philanthropist to better his whole class, or that his punishment had been overruled to bless and save one of his brother-men."

It would be expected that a Broad Churchman would have earnest words to utter in regard to the social iniquities which he found hindering and spoiling the national life. It has been a feature of the movement from its beginning that the leaders of this section of the Church have been known as thoughtful and persistent social reformers. Arnold of Rugby, who, more than any man

perhaps, shaped for an earlier generation the thoughts and principles which are generally identified with the faith of a Broad Churchman, was a passionate leader in all earnest movements towards the elevation and purification of social and national life. His keen sense of the need of ecclesiastical reform was not more remarkable then his anxiety that our people should be delivered from the trammels of a bad social system. The late Rev. F. D. Maurice was almost an enthusiast whenever he touched such matters; but his province and mission were different from Arnold's—he was essentially, and well-nigh alone, the divine of the new party. He had to expound, and often to defend, its doctrinal position. Though he was a preacher for many years in two London churches, and mingled in the busy whirl of our modern life, he was able to accomplish as much work in the way of actual theological writing as we were accustomed to believe could only be got through by a competent scholar of the old time.

But Mr. Brooke looks fearlessly at our social foibles and habits; and when he speaks of them it is with all the energy of his soul. The question was raised not long ago in an important quarter, whether the preaching of the present day is not far less practical than it should be. It is held that sin is exposed and condemned with unabated earnestness; but it is sin in the abstract. What is wanted is, that the particular frauds and impositions should be pointed out, and denounced with the zealous energy of a champion of the morality of the Bible. We should hear more, these critics claim, of pottles of strawberries with the finest fruit at the top to take the eye and delude the customer; of reels of cotton marked "a hundred yards," but holding only fifty; of cloth looking smooth and feeling strong, which is nothing but shoddy; of sanded sugar, watered milk, dirty tea compounds, and, in short, the almost numberless imitations which are palmed upon an unsuspecting public. What with men of business, who defy the parson when he trenches upon matters about which he is altogether ignorant, and critics, who think they know how sermons could be made to yield greater profit to

the hearers, the preacher of to-day is not always in an enviable position. There is, no doubt, a medium place which wisdom will assign when she is fairly trusted. We believe Mr. Brooke has, upon the whole, found that place. In November, 1866—that is, before the passing of the Act which may be held to have made some difference—he thus denounced the notorious election practices :—

"Our elections are so conducted that the future members of Parliament are in many cases wittingly actors of a lie, shutting their eyes, on the pretence that the money is given for expenses which they know is for bribery. The money goes to debase and enslave the voter, and it is plain that those who bribe are, morally, more guilty than those who are bribed—as much more as the tempter is worse than the tempted. The worst feature in the case is the amusement which this corruption seems to afford to English society."

Mr. Brooke claims that the last sentence is now untrue, but wishes he could say the same for those which follow :—

"Step lower in the social scale; come from Parliament to monetary life. English honesty was once a proverb; English dishonesty, unless we repent, will soon become the second reading of the proverb. There is no need to dwell upon the dishonesty of speculations, the made-up balance-sheet, the ruin of thousands by selfish greed, which have disgraced our banks, railways, and commercial houses; the false balance and the cruel adulteration, the lying advertisements which dishonour our trade. It is enough to say that no man who loves his country can see this widespread system of theft and falsehood without dismay."

It would be unfair not to point out that Mr. Brooke is a faithful reasoner with his brother clergymen upon the difficulties by which they, as a class, are now beset. He does not speak with that unctuous, and yet woe-begone manner, which, when it is assumed, at once gives the cue to what we may expect. He addresses them as a man would his fellow-men who had deep and earnest convictions of what danger and duty require, and

meant to help them to rise into a higher condition of Christian life. In the same year (1866) he said:—

"The clergy run into all sorts of theories, without clearly knowing whither they are going. They say they are pursuing truth; but there is no method in the pursuit. They are like men lost in an Australian wood, who run to and fro, and, after many hours, find themselves at the place they started from. Many, in despair of rest, rush to find it, and only find stagnation, in the Church of Rome.

"All kinds of experiments are tried. A bishop sets his face like a flint, and calls in question the authenticity of nearly all the early history of the Old Testament. He destroys, he does not dream of constructing. Some of the younger clergy employ their time in only opposing the old forms of religion, forgetting that they ought to build and not to overthrow; forgetting that every work of opposition is a negative work, and that a negation has no force. Another body of clergy have fallen in love with the past, and seek by a retrograde movement to find God again in life, forgetting that God is always *in front* of men. They attempt to revive that power of the priesthood which England spent so much blood and so many years in destroying, and they are so blind as to imagine that England will suffer its revival. In a hundred ways the spirit of men is stirred, but how and for what end no one can yet tell."

Mr. Brooke has the faculty for expressing in a very pointed, and sometimes almost epigrammatic way, a fine conception of a truth, or the principle which underlies a fact. These sentences have the charm of apophthegms and maxims; they are fitted at once to fix their place in heart, conscience, memory. We wonder if Mr. Brooke has written poetry? he has the feeling and passion of the poet, and he gives proof of possessing that charm and spell in the selection and management of words which imparts to them their living hold upon our hearts.

We quote the following sentences from a few of his sermons, which will confirm our opinion:—

"We cannot understand any portion of our life when

we are involved in it. We see it too closely and too passionately."

"There is nothing without its compensation in this world. Some are happy all their lives. Set over against that, that they never know what exquisite, passionate joy may be."

"Remorse is slain by belief in love."

"One of the sad comforts of trial is this, that it is the touchstone of friendship."

"We often lose in trial what is calculable; we oftener gain what is incalculable."

"Mary's silence is, next to that of Christ's, the most remarkable thing in this history. She was a woman of quiet thought, of solitary prayer, of tacit power." (A fine description in a few words.)

"The Law, as a set of literal maxims, of negative precepts, culminated in Pharisaism."

"The Pharisees deified the husk, the shell; Christ rejected the shell, and discovered the kernel."

"It is only when joy is most passionate that we are dimly conscious how awful sorrow may be in its supremest depths."

"What would life be without its ideals? It is only ideals which kindle continued action."

"The world is too much with us, and God too little."

"God wrestles with us now, when our life comes to its Jabbok in the midnight, and the path divides to heaven or to hell."

Mr. Brooke looks upon human nature, as a whole, with more breadth of view and depth of feeling than the eloquent Canon who fills St. Paul's with his lofty appeals and powerful statements of truth. There is more real homeliness in the Queen's Chaplain. He is not so far away from you, lost in the meditative heights of an isolated ecclesiasticism. He comes to you where you wish to meet him, as a brother and a friend. You are not indignant at the prospect of discovering some possible difference in nature, requiring the preacher to treat you as if he were an archangel and you a wretched mortal creature, full of gross imperfection and misery. This man is not a priest in that objectionable sense

which makes you feel as if your preacher were charged with a Divine authority so to represent God to you, that you must not dare to speak to Him unless under priestly guidance and with priestly help. Mr. Stopford Brooke would say to any prostrate inquirers, "Stand up! I myself also am a man!" We are not addressed in a *preacherish*, soft-sawder way; but as men and women having the seal of God upon our brows. He does not shirk any duty of inquiry or speech which you may lay upon him: he is free to think out for himself, and for you, any of the great problems of life which may ask for solution. All history is bright for him as it was for that devout and lofty thinker who, more than any other man, gained the end of his mission in impressing his brethren in the Church with the feeling, that the Divine Almighty Being is working in all things for the everlasting good of every one of us. Hence he leaves the beaten paths which so many still are treading, and looks everywhere for tracks which may bring him to a wider knowledge of his fellow, and at last lead him to the feet of God. It is superfluous to remark upon the beauty and perfectness of Mr. Brooke's style. There is a clearness and felicity in it which savours of the culture of that old University which is his Alma Mater. But there is all the force and strength which could only be imparted by deep convictions and earnest feeling.

He may not possess the faculty for speaking to that now restless, upheaving mass of life which will soon stir our people as with the throes of a revolution. He is not gifted with a tongue which, like that of the illustrious "Tribune of the people," could lead forward a nation in its passionate enthusiasm; but he can take a high place—indeed, does take one—among those who are sharing in God's great purpose to save mankind. He sympathises with the keen hunger for freedom which is laying hold on men; and loses few chances of uttering a hearty "Good-speed you!" to all that yearn for its destined day of joy and triumph. He recognises the preacher's true place in this hour of dawning; and is ready always with a cheerful hope and an inspiring word as a proclaimer of the Kingdom of God.

The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

Mr. Beecher has sometimes been spoken of as the Spurgeon of America. The unfitness of such an appellation may be tested by using the reverse, and styling Mr. Spurgeon the Ward Beecher of England. No two men in the possession of wide popular influence can well be more unlike than the famous American and English preachers. Their influence is gained with a different class of hearers; and their sermons are as unlike as sermons can well be. The voice of Beecher is heard upon subjects which are never mentioned by Spurgeon. He is a great political and social power in America, and boldly lays down his claim to be heard upon topics which affect the national life in any way which may command his sympathy. In the great struggle between North and South, he was everywhere regarded as a man whose words had immense weight. His visit to England at that time of difficulty and misunderstanding was of distinct and appreciable value in opening up a channel for the interflowing of the best feelings of both countries. None can have listened to that strong and loving man without feeling that he rose to the height of human power in the matter of speech. There was a fusion of all that was noblest in the mother and daughter as he stood upon the platform of Exeter Hall, and pleaded the justice of the Northern cause, and claimed the sympathy of Christian Englishmen in the hour of their awful conflict and suffering. We do not say that Mr. Spurgeon would not have power with some people in the United States if he ever were to raise his voice in connection with any great International question; but he would not be looked to, nor thought of as the man to represent our feeling in America, as Mr. Beecher was trusted to represent his country in England. The preacher of the Tabernacle might say that he has other

work to do for which he is more fitted, but he would never deny the great value of the services which Mr. Beecher has in such ways been able to render to truth, liberty, and international goodwill.

Mr. Beecher comes of a race of preachers. He himself said that six out of eight sons of his father's took to it quite naturally, and the two others did no good at anything else. The father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, was highly esteemed, and universally known in America as one of the ablest preachers of his day. The old man was a kind of patriarch in the Churches of his faith and order. Henry is never weary of referring to him; the old man's hand is upon him in his own advancing age as it was in the time of youth and promise; and those hearers have never come to a proper understanding of the son's greatest power who could ever weary of listening to the tales which he tells of him. He speaks truthfully and wisely. Sometimes he refers to phases of the old man's character which reveal his weaknesses rather than the sources of his strength. This is not done of purpose, but he is too fair a critic of even the man he holds in such affectionate reverence to give an untruthful portraiture of him. Henry was a quick and emotional child. It is enough to recall an incident which is mentioned by Mrs. Stowe. When he was about four years old, after his mother's death, he was observed as being often very busy at digging a hole in the garden. He was questioned about it, and said he was trying to go to his mother. He had seen her laid in the grave close by, and was, of course, always told that she had gone to heaven. He therefore thought that the ground was the pathway to heaven, and was seeking to travel through it in search of the dear friend of his heart who had left him. He is an old man now; but all that tenderness and keenness of love and sympathy remain in his heart as fresh and strong as ever. We have no hesitation in pronouncing Mr. Beecher to be the greatest of living popular preachers. He holds this rank by reason of his possession of varied qualities of heart and mind which go to compose the requisites of the most effective preaching. It may be said of him that he is

distinguished by these qualities in a greater degree and variety than any living preacher. His church at Brooklyn is as much sought for by visitors to New York as if it were some relic of ancient glory, or scene of great national events. His sermons are printed week by week as are those of Mr. Spurgeon. To a great extent, and in the very best sense, Mr. Beecher may be said to be an extempore preacher, so that his sermons are reported for the purpose of publication. This is indeed a marvel that a man should be able to produce so much matter which is worthy of being read by the most thoughtful and intelligent. He is a busy man, giving attention to many matters, and conducts one of the largest and most widely circulated religious newspapers in the States. And yet the sermons have all the vigour and freshness of compositions upon which a man has bestowed abundant and unbroken attention. He himself would say, perhaps, that it is because of the constant intercourse which he has with men in all varieties of ways that he is able to draw upon this ever-changing revelation for matter to supply his pulpit with themes, and lessons, and illustrations. There must be some remarkable springs of power in that man's heart and life, or he could never continue to wield the influence which he has secured. What is the character of that power? And what are the sources whence it is derived? By what wonderful force is he enabled to sway so sceptral an influence over men for their good? What are the moral, spiritual, and intellectual qualities by which he can control with so much ease the impulses of the large congregations which listen to him every Sunday? Wherein lies the magic and the charm, the marked and wonderful success of the man?

First of all he is a great lover of his kind. He does not begin his work by laying an indictment against the race. He begins where the Bible begins, with man's sonship to God; and of course, as he proceeds, takes in all the great facts of our solemn human history. He is full of the "enthusiasm of humanity." Theological he can be upon necessity; but he thinks more of man than of theological systems. He beholds his fellows sunken

low in helpless sinfulness and sorrow ; but he does not continually speak of this ; he brings in his hand the healing balm of love and grace, and beseeches men to receive the blessings which God bestows through his instrumentality. He is not a descendant of the monks, but of all those who in every age have striven to lead men to the great Father and Friend from whom they have wandered. All that concerns man has a place in his affections, and can awaken his sympathies. The cry of human suffering and sorrow falls upon his ear with a sound which instantly finds responsive echoes in his heart. The interest with which he dealt in one of the first series of lectures on "preaching," before the divinity students of Yale College, with the question of the proper place for a pulpit or preaching rostrum in a church, is but one among many illustrations of his deep love of the race, and the essential position which it constantly holds in his heart. When Plymouth Church was to be built, a friend of his, the son of President Day, himself a civil engineer, consulted with him as to the kind of building which should be erected. The preacher, who loved the people, said— "Let me have the platform so that I can have the people all about me, behind me and before me, and on all sides of me, that I may feel I am in their midst, and at every moment enjoy the inspiration of their presence and contact." And for the same reason he criticised the arrangement by which his friend Dr. Storrs, of the "Church of the Pilgrims," was kept at a freezing distance from his hearers by the intervening space between the pulpit and the pews, forming a gulf of separation that needed to be bridged over with some energy before he could get at them. These things were mentioned by Mr. Beecher with a different reason ; but they also serve as illustrations of the remark which we have made. The very look of the man indicates at once that he is the friend of humanity. He has an open, frank, generous expression. Ten years ago he looked like a boy : when he stood upon the platform at Exeter Hall, he was as simple and artless in his bearing as a child. As we grasped his honest hand before he stood there to

receive that fine ovation of national welcome, he seemed to us one of the most ingenuous, loving, and simple-hearted men we had ever met. We have not seen him since that year of trial and care. It is said that his hair has whitened, and that he wears the impressive look of age. A very excellent, life-like photograph lies before us now, the gift of one of his ardent admirers and disciples. It bears traces of the deepening lines of advancing years; and we know that some of the boyish simplicity has been darkened by many burdensome anxieties. But there is not a sign, as there never was, and never could be, of repulsion and repugnance. The man is looking and yearning yet for those who may be helped by his preaching to rise above what he so often calls the "basilar" qualities of existence into the more spiritual region of life and blessedness. He is swayed himself by passions and impulses which bring him near to his fellows. He is a friend and helper of his kind, as every preacher should be. Some preachers have become famous, it is true, by means of, or as we should rather say, in spite of, the free-and-easy way in which they have inveighed against mankind; but somehow, one has a right to suppose hearers have divined the deeper feelings of their honest hearts. Their words have been as drawn swords, but the true law of kindness has been in their souls.

Akin to this quality is another which is very manifest in Mr. Beecher's influence, his really tender sympathy with men. As he preaches you can but feel that his heart broods over your sinfulness, and yearns to give you light and peace. He puts himself alongside you in your cares and sufferings, and is ever ready to administer the fullest consolations of the religion of Jesus Christ. Where another man, possessed of undoubted power, would compel men to bow down to such truths as set forth the majesty and glory of God, he wins you to acquiescence along the gentler pathway of loving submission. If you have difficulties which occasion doubt and fear, he has perhaps felt the same; or is possessed of such sensitiveness and delicacy of sympathy as will furnish the power for helping you to overcome

them. He is a priest who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on those that are out of the way. There are some ministers of religion who will lead you to a merciful Saviour, but require that you shall first of all receive a disciplinary treatment of a very painful kind. None could ever dread the presence, or doubt the certainty of the kindness of Mr. Beecher. He will not reproach you in a hard, unkind way. The following extract from his last course of Yale Lectures exhibits his true nature :—

"It is not the man who has the most profound sense of the glory of God; it is not the man who has the most acute sensibility of the sinfulness of sin; it is the man who carries in his heart something of the feeling which characterised the atoning Christ—it is he that is the most effectual preacher. It is the man who has some such sorrow for sin that he would rather take penalty on himself than that the sinner should bear it. It is not the man who is merely seeking the vindication of abstract law, or the recognition of a great, invisible God; it is the man who is seeking in himself to make plain the manifestation of God as a Physician of souls—sorrowing for them, calling to them, and yearning to do them good. It is the compassion of men who, while they know how to depict the dangerousness of sin, oftentimes its meanness, and always its violation of Divine law, yet recognise that they can never bring men so easily to an admission of their sinfulness by representing God's wrath, and producing in them a feeling of terror, as by holding up before them the Divine compassion and kindness.

"'Come here,' says a father to his child; 'you played truant, it seems.' 'No, I didn't,' says the boy. 'You didn't? Now don't undertake to deceive me; you did! You see that whip; you know what is coming; own that you did it.' 'I didn't do it.' 'Well, how came you not to be at school?' 'I was sent on an errand.' 'Who sent you?' 'The schoolmaster.'

"Suppose, instead of approaching the boy in anger, and driving him into a succession of lies through fear, the man had called to him, and said, 'Have you had a

pleasant time, my son? You have been weak to-day. I am very sorry for you. I know you were tempted, and you gave way to the temptation. If I had been with you I could have helped you. Perhaps I can help you some now. I am very sorry that you did that. I don't mean to punish you; but I want to help you out of this weakness.'

"All the time the boy's tears are running down his cheeks; he does not deny the charge; and when his father goes on to point out the indecorum of which he is guilty, the ruin to which it will lead him if he persists in it, and the bad example which he has set in the school, he feels worse and worse; and when finally the father asks, 'What will your mother think of it?' he boo-hoos right out. He cannot bear to have his mother told; and the father says, 'If you will try to do better, I won't say anything about it;' and he is exceedingly grateful to his father; and the next time he is tempted to play truant all his best feelings rise up to hinder him; and all in him that is generous and loving says, 'I don't want to do it.'

"In one case the father came to the boy with wrath and penalty, and the boy hardened himself and resisted. In the other case the father came to the boy with the same charge, but he did it in such a way as to bring him into a condition in which his best moral feelings were roused against temptation."

And with more wisdom and depth of feeling than we usually get from Christian teachers who hold prominent positions, he observed, in his first course:—

"I know men of great learning. I could mention their names, and you would recognise them as men of great ability in their pastoral lives, men of the greatest breadth of thought, and really and interiorly men of profound emotion, but their ministry has never been very fruitful—that is, they have never moved either the multitudes, or, very largely, the individuals of the community where they have been. I have thought I saw the reason of it in this; that their sympathy ran almost exclusively toward God. They were on God's side altogether. They were always vindicating God. They

were upholding the Divine government. And they produced, if I may say so, the feeling that they were God's attorneys, that they were special pleaders on that side. I would not say that a man should not be in sympathy with God, but it should be remembered that God Himself is in sympathy with sinful and erring men, that He broke down all the brilliance and glory of the heavenly estate that He might mingle Himself among them; and no preacher is the true agent of God, or really takes sides with God, who does not sympathise with men, but who simply holds up the majesty and sternness and power and glory of the Divine government. I have seen men who all the while produced the impression God—God—God; there was nothing in them that breathed of gentleness, sweetness, or sympathy—the very things that characterised Christ, and which were in Him the interpretation of the real interior Godhead; those things were absent from their ministry, and if you will not misunderstand it, I would say that they failed because they had too exclusive a sympathy with God."

He is but reckoning up the elements which have gone to make up his own success when he speaks thus. He has measured the value of sympathy, and seen how it has found access to human hearts for the claims of truth and God when nothing else would have availed. The same truths might have been set forth; and nearly the same words, in many instances, have been used; but nothing would have succeeded unless men had been laid hold upon by the might of sympathy.

The sympathy which he exhibits is not of that kind which springs from effeminacy; it is associated with the highest form of manliness. Mr. Beecher does not deal in puling sentiment, and ask that that may be stamped with the Divine name of sympathy. He stands erect with the energy and reality of a man. If he shed tears over you those tears are worth more than words can describe; they flow from one of the manliest and bravest hearts which beats. In that erect head, and clear, straight-looking eye you may witness the sure signs of manliness. Meanness and subterfuge are far from him. As he said at Yale—"Christian ministers

are to be, not men that pray four times a day, and wear black clothes and white cravats, and walk with the consciousness that the whole universe is looking upon them. A minister is a live man. He is a large-hearted man." The dignity which he affects may therefore be set down as that of Christian manhood. And that is what he seeks to form in others. He aims at helping them to be men, and he does not put aside his endeavours until he has made them ashamed of all that detracts from the dishonour which belongs to those who are not men.

And he knows what is in man. He has looked into human hearts, and has had intimate knowledge of the sins and sorrows which oppress our nature. He is never tired of counselling the supreme value of a knowledge of man as distinct from mere book-knowledge. He spoke to the students at Yale of the way in which he fitted himself, week by week, for the preaching of Sunday. He sought as much contact with men as he could secure by throwing himself upon the pathways in which they gather. He walked along the highways which were most frequented, took a turn upon a ferry-boat, or along the river, and otherwise, as occasion offered, brought himself into connection with his kind. And a very slight acquaintance with his sermons will be enough to convince a reader that he understands our human nature. It is not preaching about the dogmas which various schools of theological thought have favoured; but rather a careful dealing with the wants and yearnings of men like himself. Very earnestly did he advise the young men at Yale to make themselves familiar with human nature. He exhorted them to make it their study. He told them how they were to do it. They were to study it scientifically; to acquaint themselves in the honestly critical way with the works of such writers as Bain and Spencer, not merely for the purpose of improving their scholarly acquirements, but that they might know the better how to set about their great work of preaching. And in order that they may know man in his totality they are to look into the great physiological truths which are every year being more

fully and clearly expounded. He says: "I have often seen young ministers sit at the table, and even those of sixty years of age, eating out of all proportion, beyond the necessities of their systems; and I have seen, on the other hand, ministers who ate below the necessities of their systems, under a vague impression that sanctifying grace wrought better on an empty stomach than on a full one." All this would be put on the way for correction by some attention to the laws which govern our physical being. To this same end he also advises an acquaintance with phrenology. "Nothing can give you the formulated analysis of mind as that can." "A minister studies human nature for the purpose of regenerating men." "I take great delight, if ever I can get a chance, in riding on the top of an omnibus with the driver, and talking with him. What do I gain by that? Why, my sympathy goes out for those men, and I recognise in them an element of brotherhood; that great human element which lies underneath all culture, which is more universal and more important than all special attributes, which is the great generic bond of humanity, between man and man. If ever I saw one of those men in my church, I could preach to him, and hit him under the fifth rib with an illustration, much better than if I had not been acquainted with him. I have driven the truth under many a plain jacket. But what is more, I never found a plain man in this world who could not tell me many things that I did not know before. There is not a gatekeeper at the Fulton Ferry, or an engineer or a deckhand on the boats, that I am not acquainted with, and they help me in more ways than they know of. If you are going to be a minister, keep very close to plain folks; don't get above the common people. There is no danger that you will lose your sympathy with culture and refinement, as some people seem to fear. There is no danger that you will lose your purity and sensitiveness. There will be nothing incompatible in this course with the performance of your professional duties as a preacher. Good-heartedness and good, plain, hearty sympathy with men will help everything in you which

ought to be helped, and diminish those things which ought to be diminished. Study human nature by putting yourself in alliance with men. See how a mother, that best of philosophers in practical matters, understands every one of her children, and the special differences between them all; and does she not carry herself with true intuition as to their daily needs, and with the interpreting philosophy of sensitive love? She is the best trainer of men, and has the best mental philosophy, so far as practical things are concerned."

Not less is Mr. Beecher acquainted with the world of nature and art than with human beings. He studies them both, and he enjoins their study upon aspirants for pulpit work. Everybody knows that he is a kind of farmer as well as preacher; that he prides himself in growing good fruit and fine flowers. He seems to obtain in these things the relief which helps him to get through with the heavy work which falls to his lot. The man literally revels in nature, as may be seen in any of his sermons. This may be felt upon reading the following passage from his last course of lectures at Yale:—"I would not, for all the comfort which I might get from the books of the Alexandrian Library, or from the Lenox Library, give up the comfort which I get out of nature. Nature, now that I have had the revelation of God which interprets it to me, I would not give up for anything. I had almost said that I had rather lose my Bible than to lose my world. There is no sunlight that does not say something to me of the Sun of Righteousness. There is no created thing that does not say something to me of God, who framed it. I sit on the hill-side in summer, and watch the spiders as they spin their webs, and the grasshoppers as they leap over me, freshman-like, jumping first, and looking to see where they have landed afterwards, and the birds as they skip from branch to branch, or fly from tree to tree. There is not an animal that distrusts me. I sit so still that the birds forget that I am there, and sing as they do not often sing when persons are near them; and the ants creep about me and on me, and I have a sense of the relationship of

these things. There is nothing that grows—no weed, no grass, no flower, no fruit—that is not in some way related to God in my thoughts; and I am never so near Him as when I am in the presence of His works—as when, night or day, I am in that solemn cathedral the world of nature, and behold its ever-changing beauty. There are no such frescoes in art as God's hand paints in the heavens. There are no such relations of God as come through nature. In the budding, blossoming days of spring; in the balmy days of summer; in the fruitful days of autumn, in the days of winter, in every day of the year, there is something which is a separate leaf to me in God's outside Bible, now that I have learned to read it. I owe more to Ruskin than to any theologian. Eyes I had, but I did not see; now I see marvellous things. Ears had I, but I did not hear; now I hear things that are wonderful beyond all conception. New realms in the universe of God have been disclosed to me through these things. They have been a source of unspeakable comfort to me, and from them I have derived a power of comforting other people in my preaching. I owe much, very much, to the fact that I have become, as it were, Hebraised—that I have gone back and practised upon the genius of that noble old stock who learned, by a wise spiritualising of things visible, to discern the invisible God."

We might refer to the sermon on "Religion and the Beautiful," in testimony of his passionate admiration for art. But the passages that could be quoted are almost numberless. He is entranced and thrilled by the sight of pictures as if he were himself a painter; and so he comes to us as a teacher whose heart has been refreshed with an influence which will gladden and comfort us. He has a poet's heart and mind. He sees what we may all see if our eyes are but touched with the Divine finger, the exceeding beauty and glory of the world around us. The following extract is too interesting to be omitted:—"I know that when I was in the Luxembourg, and saw the first real regiment of paintings that I ever saw in my life, everything retreated to my brain. I did not feel the floor when I walked on

it. My head seemed like a globe of fire. I never felt the sanctity of the love and presence of God so near me, and never had such an appreciation of the beauty and glory of infinite justice as I did in the gallery of pictures at the Luxembourg. I might have sat, as I did, in Calvin's chair at Geneva without any emotions of that kind. I appreciate the life of Calvin, his great work and his excellencies; but no associations connected with him could produce such an effect upon me as I received at that time through the sense of taste. My dear old father never could sympathise with that feeling. He thought that though it might sometimes be excused, it was a wishy-washy sort of piety. And there are many who feel that this exquisite beauty cannot have much to do with religion. And yet in many natures it is auxiliary to their conscience; and in such cases through it you will reach the moral sense when you cannot in any other way."

Perhaps one of Mr. Beecher's main sources of power as a preacher consists in his exceedingly striking ability for illustrating his subjects. You are never palled and wearied with long exercitations, which might be excellent in their way, but which, for all that, have the effect of repressing if not depressing the intellectual and spiritual interest which we should cherish in a sermon that has any chance of doing us good. He is powerful as a philosopher, but his philosophy takes a form which gives it a charm with humble minds and hearts. He never contents himself, and knows that he can never satisfy his hearers, with cold statements of truths, however carefully they may be made. He paints a picture of a proposition, and then marks its truth and beauty, or its ugliness and falsehood. By these means he lays hold of a larger class of hearers than he could ever reach or influence by any other mode of appeal. He regards the imagination as being the most important of all the elements which go to make up a preacher. He does not wish to be understood as meaning by this the imagination as the creator of fiction, and still less as the factor of embellishment. He holds it to be a most vital element in preaching.

And who does not feel it? A man may talk about things without moving us; but as soon as he shows them to us we begin to respond to his influence, and acknowledge his sway. We are taken out of the region of mere dogma and proposition, and come into the broad beautiful realm of life and joy. The heart beats responsively to the touch of a true preacher, and we are willing to sit and listen that we may learn as from the lips of loving sympathy the true things of God. We may refer our readers to his admirable lecture upon "Rhetorical Illustrations" for a full conception of his aim as to the "mode in which we learn a new thing by its being likened to something which we already know." The sermons are full of illustrations; and while now and then they may not be the best which Mr. Beecher could supply, they are always helpful to a better understanding of the man and the truth which he preaches.

And perhaps he has gained a larger amount of power as a preacher through the use of hope and cheer than from any other cause. You are not crushed and broken down by listening to him. If your sins are numerous, it is borne in upon your heart that there is a great and gracious Saviour waiting to impart the forgiveness which you need. If your temptations are full of strength, and you doubt the energy of your inner life to do successful battle with the evils by which you are beset, some tender kindly word puts you instantly in possession of a motive for fighting on with bravery unfailing and resolute. When the battle rolls heavily and the dense smoke enswathes the fighters, the hearts of men failing them for fear, then is the time for the captain who is leading his troops to show them that his own heart has not lost its enthusiasm. And this spiritual captain never loses heart, and will not let you lose yours. In the dark and cloudy day he is with you to sustain your drooping courage, and nerve you by his inspiriting counsels for the conflict which yet remains. He expresses in very beautiful words which occur towards the close of his last series of lectures the thankful joy with which he remembers how he has been

enabled to impart hope and comfort to men. In a ministry which has been so popular and far-reaching, innumerable occasions must have arisen for rendering such service to troubled and darkened souls. It is a satisfaction which no words can express, and must produce joy as full as the heart can realise. We devoutly trust that this hope-bringing ministry may long exercise its functions, and afford an example which may be of service to the present generation of preachers.

The Late Rev. F. W. Robertson, M.A.,

OF TRINITY CHAPEL, BRIGHTON.

THE influence of Mr. Robertson's sermons has been remarkable and extensive. The whole history of literature does not furnish a parallel to the extraordinary results attending the publication of successive volumes of serious compositions. It is possible to refer to cases in which the works of a man hitherto unknown to fame have, after his death, obtained a wide circulation and enduring celebrity. It is not wonderful if poems and histories, stories and autobiographies secure this result; but, of all kinds of literature, sermons are the most unlikely to obtain it. Even if they are good and popular discourses, they generally receive their principal attention at the time of being preached. The world hears of them as they are being delivered, and strenuous efforts are put forth by church-goers to listen to the living voice. So men felt when Robert Hall uttered those orations which, in their own way, are unrivalled by anything which has since been heard. The crowds which once thronged St. Margaret's, Lothbury, on Tuesday mornings, to hear the Rev. Henry Melvill, are not forgotten; nor is the sensation quite passed out of memory which used to display its eager interest in Hatton Garden, when Edward Irving spake forth the words of the living God.

In other days Bossuet, Massillon, and Bourdaloue were eminent for the fame which they achieved while they were preaching their magnificent discourses. It is not uncommonly the case that, when the charm of the living voice, and the impression produced by the personal attractions of the preacher, are lost, that his most eloquent sermons fail to exert the influence which even the feeblest of his utterances once produced. It is

the agonising plaint of our great living poet, that his own

> "Mortal lullabies of pain
> May bind a book, may line a box,
> May serve to curl a maiden's locks:"

too often is this the case with the printed discourses of our greatest preachers.

Here, however, is an instance of a preacher, not much known beyond the circle of sermon-hearers in a fashionable watering-place while he lived, but known, after his death, through his remembered or reported discourses, to multitudes of earnest men and women in both hemispheres. Mr. Robertson's celebrity has been extended amongst the most refined and thoughtful members of society. Neither his style nor his doctrine would be likely to commend him at present to a large section of the lower middle class—undoubtedly the most devoted sermon-readers,—and the high price of the volumes for a long time effectually prevented their wide circulation amongst the humble poor. They rank with the few books rarely to be met with on a second-hand bookstall, and hardly ever to be purchased for less than their value. We find many copies of them often kept by ardent admirers for the purpose of lending to those whose taste for such literature is not aided by their means to procure it.

No books in any library where they have a place are so much underscored or marked with marginalia. When novels are accounted dull and insipid these are read with delight. And this does not come about because of their eloquent passages, as men count eloquence. Reciters find but little to their taste, and sensationalists absolutely wonder at their fame. The sermons, as we have them, are not finished productions as they came from the pen of their author, but have been supplied to us in all sorts of ways; from the shorthand notes of private hearers, dictation after preaching by Mr. Robertson, his own reproduction hastily written on the evening of delivery, the fragmentary notes which he prepared before delivery, and the recollections of some of his intelligent hearers. And yet no sermons of the time, however carefully prepared and perfectly

elaborated, have met with a tithe of the attention which the best culture and earnest piety of our day have bestowed on these. Perhaps we shall not be saying too much if we add that no sermons form the basis of so large an amount of preaching as these. We should have more hope of our modern pulpit if we felt that Mr. Robertson's very powerful thoughts were more consistently held and propagated; but, unfortunately, not a few who are compelled to submit to the talismanic charm which he exerts over their imagination and piety, resist him in his attempts to disarm their feeble prejudices, and to correct their ill-founded conclusions.

Whence, now, does this extraordinary influence take its rise? What is the secret of this marvellous power? Mr. Robertson was neither an Anglican bishop nor a popular Dissenting leader, but the incumbent of an Episcopal chapel at Brighton, of quite ordinary pretensions. He echoed no popular cry, he espoused no fashionable prejudice; he was neither the tool nor the idol of a party. He eschewed sects and denominations, but he was the honest critic of his own Church. He was distrusted by many, and cruelly persecuted by a few. His wide influence is an unexplainable enigma, if it can only be solved by the help of what we know of ordinary popular successes.

It is fair and right to ask—Is Mr. Robertson's posthumous fame due to the peculiarity of the opinions which he held, combined with the unusual earnestness with which he enunciated them? Was he a religious enthusiast? and is his memory on that account cherished by those who have drunk into his spirit? In answer to these inquiries it may be said, that Mr. Robertson's opinions were not of a peculiar cast, nor was his enthusiasm of that special order which wins the attention of vulgar fanatics. It is not to be denied that he held certain distinctive opinions, and no doubt these had a fair share in producing the general result of which we are thinking.

As a preacher of the Gospel and a teacher of Christianity, a man may become famous in a variety of ways. Rhetoric and oratory, doctrine and style, manner and

matter, all have a share. It will be our object to discuss briefly the causes, as we imagine them to be, of a popularity which continues long after he himself has passed away. Let it be understood that it is with Mr. Robertson as a preacher alone that we are concerned. His character, as it is portrayed for us in Mr. Brooke's excellent biography, and as we may gather impressions in relation to it from a careful study of his sermons and lectures, might furnish a most interesting and profitable subject for an essay. We shall simply look at it now as it may help us to explain the characteristics of his preaching.

We think his sermons have power over us *because they grapple with so many of the living, personal doubts and speculations which occupy a great number of minds.* They are timely and pertinent; not treating of remote inquiries and effete subjects. Many preachers discourse very eloquently upon the doubts that disturbed and twisted the minds of now-buried generations of men. The difficult speculations and perplexing discussions of people who have long gone to their rest are treated of with all the zest and passion which most men bestow on subjects of current importance and urgent necessity. And we may fairly admit that sometimes these matters are discussed in a way which compels us to acknowledge the eloquence and energy of the preacher. We are led back into the pathways, the turmoils, and controversies of bygone ages, and stand in the presence of the most renowned theological gladiators. Origen and Tertullian, Augustine and Anselm live again, and speak to us through their successors of to-day.

But then we often tire of these discussions, not being perhaps either historians or in the proper sense theologians at all; and when the matter of personal religion confronts us earnestly we remember that *we are men.* Every age and all men have their urgent and momentous inquiries. The course of events in our personal lives has brought home to us certain other difficulties, which cause us harassing anxiety and uneasiness. We may not care much to rectify the conclusions at which polemics of distant periods arrived, but we are resolved to do something towards settling our own.

Mr. Robertson knew what were the doubts and inquiries of living men and women who went to hear him: and to the best of his ability he strove to help them. They were not slow to discover that they had in him an intelligent and sagacious friend—one who knew in some sort as his Master did, what was in man, and therefore addressed his words to the impatient inquirers which were yearning after help and guidance. His sermons are not lectures on doubts, but often brave and earnest words to doubters. The reader finds to-day, and is surprised at finding, the very perplexity which has often harassed him fairly met and thoughtfully considered. There is, therefore, a present and urgent reason why his sermons are valuable to men; they are helpful in ridding their minds of wearing anxieties, and in directing them to such sources of hope and comfort as they need in the time of darkness and care. Mr. Robertson never refers to a difficulty of Holy Scripture or a painful inquiry of human thought for the mere purpose of expressing his sense of its profundity; but he grapples with it manfully, and even when he fails to convince us that he has explained the mystery, we can but honour him for the bravery of his manner and spirit.

Observe how he grapples with the two seemingly contradictory facts of the sinlessness and the temptation of our Lord. He recognises the difficulty in the earlier portion of the sermon upon "The Sympathy of Christ," in the first volume. "Temptation, as applied to a being perfectly free from tendencies to evil, is not easy to understand. See what the difficulty is. Temptation has two senses: it means test or probation; it means also trial, involving the idea of pain or danger. A common acid applied to gold tests it; but there is no risk or danger to the most delicate golden ornament. There is one acid, and only one, which tries it as well as tests it. The same acid, applied to a shell, endangers the delicacy of its surface. A weight hung from a bar of iron only tests its strength; the same, depending from a human arm, is a trial, involving, it may be, the risk of pains or fracture. Now, trial placed before a sinless being is intelligible enough in the sense of probation; it is a test of excellence; but it is not easy to see how it can be

temptation in the sense of pain, if there be no inclination to do wrong."

But Scripture says that Christ was tried as well as tested. "He had no evil propensities at all. Obedience was natural to Him." He was "holy, harmless, and separate from sinners." "But, then, 'He *suffered*, being tempted.' How could this be without any tendency to evil?" He proceeds to point out the difference between "desire, which is natural, and the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances, which is sin." As, for instance, resentment under injury, which is a perfectly natural feeling, and just, as well. But if it smoulder until it became retaliation, then a natural feeling has grown into a transgression. The sensation of hunger is also natural, and beyond our control; but if it leads to theft it is sin. And "this was literally one of the cases in which Christ was tried. The wish for food was in His nature in the wilderness. The very mode of gratifying it was presented to His imagination —by using Divine power in an unlawful way. Had He been so constituted that the lower wish was superior to the higher will, there would have been an act of sin. Had the two been nearly balanced, so that the conflict hung in doubt, there would have been a tendency to sin—what we call a sinful nature. But it was in the entire and perfect subjugation of desire to the will of right that a sinless nature was exhibited. Here, then, is the nature of sin. Sin is not the possession of desires; but the having them in uncontrolled ascendancy over the higher nature. Sinfulness does not consist in having *strong* desires or passions; in the strongest and highest natures all, including the desires, is strong. . . . . Sin, therefore, is not in the appetites, but in the absence of a controlling will."

He reasons this subject out with persistent energy and rare skill through many of its difficult tracks. "There were in Christ all the natural appetites of mind and body." Fasting, though resolutely and unreservedly accepted as the dictate of the higher will, was not th less severe. "Though there was no hesitation whether to obey or not, no strife in the will, in the act of mastery there was pain. There was self-denial; there was

obedience at the expense of tortured natural feeling." With what a keen sense of the reality of our Lord's suffering does He ask, "Was there no struggling? No remembrance that the cross was sharp? No recollection of the family at Bethany, and the pleasant walk, and the dear companionship which He was about to leave? 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful to die!'"

In a sermon upon Inspiration contained in the last volume he affirmed that the "grand question of Inspiration was given to this age to solve." He readily perceived that such questions as the following were being asked:—What the Bible is, and what the Bible is not.—What is meant by inspiration?—Whether inspiration is the same thing as infallibility?—When God inspired the minds, did He dictate the words?—Does the inspiration of men mean the infallibility of their words?—Is inspiration the same as dictation?—Whether, granting that we have the Word of God, we have also the words of God?—Are the operations of the Holy Spirit inspiring men compatible with partial error, as His operations in sanctifying them are compatible with partial evil?—How are we to interpret and apply the Scriptures? Is Scripture, as the Romanists say, so unintelligible and obscure that we cannot understand it without having the guidance of an infallible Church? Or is it, as some fanciful Protestants will tell us, a book upon which all ingenuity may be used to find Christ in every sentence? These questions serve to indicate that he was alive to all the interesting and important aspects of the subject upon which he was speaking. And while he did not propose to deal with all of them, he nevertheless did not put them out of sight as if he had not faced the great question before him. And this is the way in which he attacks some of the positions taken up by those who deal with Scripture after the fashion of fetishism. "Brethren, Scripture is full of Christ. From Genesis to Revelation everything breathes of Him, not every letter of every sentence, but the spirit of every chapter. It is full of Christ, but not in the way that some suppose; for there is nothing more miserable, as specimens of perverted ingenuity, than the attempts of certain commentators and preachers to find remote, and

recondite, and intended allusions to Christ everywhere. For example, they chance to find in the construction of the temple the fusion of two metals, and this they conceive is meant to show the union of Divinity with humanity in Christ. • If they read of coverings to the tabernacle, they find implied the doctrine of imputed righteousness. If it chance that one of the curtains of the tabernacle be red, they see in that a prophecy of the blood of Christ. If they are told that the kingdom of heaven is a pearl of great price, they will see it in the allusion that, as a pearl is the production of animal suffering, so the kingdom of heaven is produced by the sufferings of the Redeemer. . . This is to make the Holy Spirit speak riddles and conundrums, and the interpretation of Scripture but clever riddle-guessing."

Nor was he less mindful of the practical difficulties which obstruct our endeavours after the Christian life. In practical matters, especially those which belong to the bye-ways of human conduct, perhaps we find most preaching far too vague and indefinite to be of real utility to us. Granted that principles are all we need, and that only Roman Catholics require a science of Christian casuistry, yet we are certain that most people want far more help than they usually get in the management of their conduct and the formation of their character. These necessities are sometimes occasioned by the discussions which arise in our time, and often lead to a painful anxiety on the part of sensitive and scrupulous minds. Such subjects as Sunday travelling, the use of wealth, the regulation of the workmen's demand for more wages, the Christian's duty towards politics, &c., &c., may be adduced in point. The formation of our opinions on many practical questions should be aided by the suggestions which we get from our Christian teacher. He is the prophet of his generation, and should scathe its sins with the fiery utterances of his earnest eloquence, or rouse it to nobler and purer life by the energy of his own glowing aspirations. Mr. Robertson did not preach about sin as if it were a disease of the soul to which people in old times were subject alone. He makes us feel that sin is a present malady

from which we all are suffering now with the same virulence as in the times of Scripture history. David and Paul are not mere historical figures brought forward as *tableaux* for the service of the modern preachers. They are men whose sins and struggles are only to be understood in the light of our own deep experience. We are not separated from them by impassable gulfs; they are not remote from our sympathy and acquaintance, but nigh at our very side, because the preacher measures their capacities by the aid of his knowledge of the human heart.

There are no readers of Mr. Robertson's sermons who will refuse their testimony to his *remarkable delineations of character*. By the help of Scripture he was able to form a living conception of the men and women who are the actors in its events: and by the possession of a style which was of the most graphic power, he depicted them with the success of perfect portraiture. Yet you never feel that he is painting pictures. The last thing you would accuse him of doing is "fine writing," or "aiming at effect." If he speaks of Paul, he is concerned with giving you a faithful idea of the man's character, or of his action in any particular case or event, rather than seeking to charm you with his own fine composition. As he remarks in one of his sermons, "There is one study which never can lose interest for us so long as we are men, and that is, the investigation of human character. The deep interest of biography consists in this—that it is in some measure the description to us of our own inner history." And what fine reflections upon the character of Solomon are given to us in the same sermon! "He belongs to the peculiar class of those who begin well, and then have the brightness of their lives obscured at last. His morning sun rose beautifully; it sank in the evening, clouded, and dark with earthly exhalations—too dark to prophesy with certainty how it should rise again on the morrow. Solomon's life was not what religious existence ought to be. The life of God in the soul of man ought to be a thing of perpetual development; it ought to be more bright, and its pulsations more vigorous every year. Such, certainly—at least,

to all appearance—Solomon's was not. It was excellence, at all events, marred with inconsistency. It was original uprightness disgraced by a fall, and that fall so prolonged and signal, that it has always been a disputed question among commentators whether he ever rose from it again at all."

He is remarking upon Solomon's worldliness. "He had entered deeply into commercial speculations. He had alternate fears and hopes about the return of his merchant ships on their perilous three years' voyage to India and to Spain. He had his mind occupied with plans for building. The architecture of the Temple, his own palace, the forts and towns of his now magnificent empire, all this filled his soul. He had begun a system of national debt and ruinous taxation. He had become a slaveholder and a despot, who was compelled to keep his people down by armed force. Much of this was not wrong; but all of it was dangerous. It is a strange thing how business dulls the sharpness of the spiritual affections. It is strange how the harass of perpetual occupation shuts God out."

How singularly perfect are some of his allusions and reflections! If he had really known the men of whom he speaks, we feel he could hardly have expressed himself with more accuracy in respect to their characters and deeds. It is a high testimony to the wonderful perfection of Scripture that he should have been able to understand the persons of whom it speaks, so fully, through the help of its references and statements. A line of Scripture suggested more to Mr. Robertson than a chapter does to most men. Observe some of his reflections upon "John's Rebuke of Herod" in the third volume. "There was something exceedingly unselfish in John's truthfulness. We do not build much on a man's being merely true. It costs some men nothing to be true, for they have none of those sensibilities which shrink from inflicting pain. There is a surly, bitter way of speaking truth which says little for a man's heart. Some men have not delicacy enough to feel that it is an awkward and a painful thing to rebuke a brother: they are in their element when they can become censors of the great. John's truthfulness

was not like that. It was the earnest, loving nature of the man which made him say sharp things. Was it to gratify spleen that He reproved Herod for all the evils he had done? Was it to minister to a diseased and disappointed misanthropy? Little do we understand the depth of tenderness which there is in a rugged, true nature, if we think that."

How solemn and how beautiful—but withal, how discriminating—are some of the closing passages of this same sermon! "Devotedness to Christ is our only blessedness. . . . When a man has no guide, no master but himself, he is miserable. We want guidance, and, if we find a man nobler, wiser than ourselves, it is almost our instinct to prostrate our affections before that man, as the crowds did by Jordan, and say, 'Be my example, my guide, my soul's sovereign.' That passionate need of worship—hero-worship it has been called—is a primal, universal instinct of the heart. Christ is the answer to it."

Are there not many natures that will find comfort and guidance always in such helpful and supporting words? Do they not bring the life of a Jewish prophet alongside our own, and derive from it lessons which may be of lasting value to us? The truly human life of the man is understood by us, and the "Old Book" thus becomes the "man of our counsel and the guide of our life." This it is which constitutes for us the true reading of Scripture.

We proceed to observe that Mr. Robertson displayed, as a preacher, *the power of a poetic and fervid conception of the subjects upon which he spoke.* He looked at all things with a poet's eye, and he spoke of all things with a poet's fervour. Themes, which on some men's lips would have been very dry and uninteresting, became on his as fascinating as a poem, and glowed with the passionate ardour of a soul on fire. It must have been impossible for him to have been dull. His allusions to nature are traced with all the skill and freedom of a great painter. He spoke as one familiar with all the several moods of nature. He carried through the years of manhood the fresh and vivid conceptions of childhood. The—

"time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To him did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream,"

was lengthened for him through the years of manhood, so that he never ceased to feel as in the time of early life. The "years that brought the philosophic mind" so manifestly, never took away from him the early freshness and rapture of heart. He had the faculty of the dramatist, and could wander backward along the lines of events until he met with their causes. The world to him was not a mere gallery of images, wearing the semblance, but possessing none of the powers, of living beings. In every common man he saw a brother and a fellow-sufferer in the great universe of earnest life. There is no more charm in the best fiction than in his sermons, for they are all aglow with the same passionate feeling which gives to fiction its hold upon the heart. Of mere sentiment there is not much, but of pure feeling there is no lack.

With what thrilling energy would he express the conviction of his soul! the words are full of fire and enthusiasm. When he was in the pulpit he must have seemed to the most appreciative of his audience like a soul on fire. This is evident in his reference to the second cause of Elijah's despondency, in the sermon quoted from before—"Elijah began to feel that popularity was not love. The world will support you when you have constrained its votes by a manifestation of power; and shrink from you when power and greatness are no longer on your side. 'I, even I only, am left.'

* * * * * *

"What greater minds like Elijah's have felt intensely all we have felt in our own degree. Not one of us but what has felt his heart aching for want of sympathy. We have had our lonely hours, our days of disappointment, and our moments of hopelessness—times when our highest feelings have been misunderstood, and our purest met with ridicule. Days when our heavy secret was lying unshared, like ice upon the heart. And then the spirit gives way; we have wished that all was over

—that we could lie down tired, and rest like children, from life—that the hour was come when we could put down the extinguisher on the lamp, and feel the last grand rush of darkness on the spirit."

There are few more inspiring passages than that which speaks of the assurance of victory which came to the heart of Elijah when God said to him—"Yet have I left Me seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal." The very nerves of the soul are well-nigh visible as we feel the effects of the grand eloquence with which the noble preacher states a solemn truth, and refers to the crowning fact of the world's history.

"We turn naturally from this scene to a still darker hour and more august agony. If ever failure seemed to rest on a noble life, it was when the Son of man, deserted by His friends, heard the cry which proclaimed that the Pharisees had successfully drawn the net round their Divine victim. Yet from that very hour of defeat and death there went forth the world's life; from that very moment of apparent failure there proceeded forth into the ages the spirit of the conquering Cross. Surely if the Cross says anything, it says that apparent defeat is real victory, and that there is a heaven for those who have *nobly and truly* failed on earth.

"Distinguish, therefore, between the real and the apparent. Elijah's apparent success was in the shouts of Mount Carmel. His real success was in the unostentatious, unsurmised obedience of the seven thousand who had taken his God for their God.

"A lesson for all. For teachers who lay their heads down at night sickening over their thankless task. Remember the power of *indirect* influences; those which distil from a life, not from a sudden, brilliant effort. The former never fail; the latter often."

There was the passion of a whole heart poured out in a tide of overwhelming eloquence in some of the closing words of this same sermon. We must quote it:—"For ministers again—what is ministerial success? Crowded churches, full aisles, attentive congregations, the approval of the religious world, much impression produced? . . . . Ministerial success lies in altered

lives and obedient, humble hearts; unseen work recognised in the Judgment-day. A public man's success? That which can be measured by feast-days, and the number of journals which espouse his cause? Deeper, deeper far must he work who works for eternity. In the eye of that, nothing stands but gold—real work—all else perishes.

"Get below appearances, below glitter and show. Plant your foot upon reality. Not in the jubilee of the myriads on Carmel, but in the humble silence of the hearts of the seven thousand, lay the proof that Elijah had not lived in vain."

The indignation of his spirit scarcely consented to any limit when in his sermon on the sympathy of Christ he observed: "The way in which some speak of the sinlessness of Jesus reduces all His suffering to physical pain, destroys the reality of temptation, reduces that glorious heart to a pretence, and converts the whole of His history into a mere fictitious drama, in which scenes of trial were represented, not felt."

If preaching, as a rule, were only approximately of this kind, we should hear less of the indifference which was so naïvely expressed by the "Northern Farmer:"—

"I 'eerd un a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower my yeäd,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd, but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I comed awaäy."

Our churches and chapels would ring with the testimony of men of truth to the truth; and though many would miss the phrases, and perhaps not a few words which are to them the essentials of the Gospel, they would hear instead the earnest deliverances of human hearts upon God's message of love to our race.

All students of Robertson must from the first have been struck with *the exquisite definition and summaries of truth with which his sermons abound.* In a few words aptly chosen, and perfectly arranged, he frequently uttered what a sermon could not have surpassed. There are "life-thoughts" of most precious value and wonderful beauty in every part of his posthumous works which "Time will wear as word-jewels upon her forefinger."

Our readers' eyes will run with pleasure along the following sentences:—

"The sympathy of Christ extends to the frailties of human nature; not to its hardened guilt."

"The price of being true is the Cross."

"That is a lonely, lonely moment, when the young soul first feels God—when this earth is recognised as an 'awful place—yea, the very gate of heaven.' When the dream-ladder is seen planted against the skies, and we wake, and the dream haunts us as a sublime reality."

"Our enemies become unconsciously our best friends when their slanders deepen in us heavenlier graces."

The peroration of a sermon on "Baptism" is the following sentence—"Live the simple, lofty life which befits an heir of immortality."

"Once in the roll of ages, out of innumerable failures, from the stock of human nature, one Bud developed itself into a faultless Flower."

"There are some men whose affections are stronger than their understandings; they feel more than they think."

"In that solemn, grand thing—the Christian life—one step backward is religious death."

"God *made* the insect, the stone, the lily; but God is not the Father of the caterpillar, the lily, or the stone."

"After a life of wild selfishness, religion is servitude at first, not freedom."

"Struggle to the Cross, even though it be struggling as in chains."

"The sacrifice of Christ is done over again in every life, which is lived, not to self, but to God."

"Unworldliness is this—to hold things from God in the perpetual conviction that they will not last; to have the world, and not to let the world have us; to be the world's masters, and not the world's slaves."

One feature of Mr. Robertson's preaching must have impressed all his hearers and readers, *his extraordinary sympathy with those whom he addressed.* He did not preach to men as if he belonged not to their kind. He can never have seemed to them as a far-off, mysterious,

unworldly ecclesiastic; but always a true, honest-hearted, simple man, who saw into their deep hearts, and comprehended their longings, their sorrows, and their sins. He did not stand up in his pulpit for the purpose of declaring to his fellow men their abject sinfulness and weakness; he brought light, and guidance, and help, in every word he spoke. He did not spare men when he dealt with their sins and follies; his sentences often burned with a righteous passion; but he never left them to their sins; he proclaimed with all his power the infinite willingness of God to receive and save them. He saw in poor wrecked and stranded humanity a costly, even priceless, object of concern. No man was beneath his notice; all had a claim upon the best life of his heart. Some may have fancied that in that graceful gentleman who ascended the pulpit, they saw before them one who was too far removed from the ruder and rougher life which men must sometimes live, even to feel in sympathy with their cares and perils. But it cannot have been long, if they persevered in attendance upon his ministry, before they felt the touch of his gentle but true nature upon their hearts, thrilling them with the tenderest emotions of love and pity. He was not a *parson* with an exquisitely perfected *esprit de corps*, having a taste which early care and Oxford culture had purified in a rare degree; he was a man sensitive to all that concerned human welfare. He sought to raise the workmen around him from the low habits which were the bane and curse of their lives. He beckoned them upwards, and would have derived unspeakable joy from the growth of one aspect of our modern life, the increasing interest which is certainly felt in man as man. The rich never had a more faithful yet discriminating counsellor, the poor rarely a kindlier or braver champion, and all this sympathy is a marked feature of his sermons.

This estimate of Mr. Robertson's preaching would be incomplete if we did not avow our belief that he possessed, to a marvellous extent, *the faculty for seeing into subjects*, which would only open their treasures to the painfully protracted inquiries of most men. Mr. Robert-

son was possessed of what we mean by *genius*. It may seem to many who are thus highly gifted, that genius is the faculty of hard work: but none of us can be unaware that no amount of mental application would ever bring to some men the insight which others very quickly gain. It is true that Mr. Robertson worked so hard, that we are well-nigh appalled at his intense and even ceaseless industry. His sermons were not the inspirations of the hour when they were preached; nor were they even the result of a careful study of what the greatest men had said upon the themes which he touched; they were frequently the offspring of painful births, the utterances of a heart that groaned unspeakably with the throes of truth. Still he saw quickly into everything he gazed upon with his whole soul. He had the eye of genius. Truth and wisdom were his familiars. What thousands may have looked upon and have never understood at all, he swiftly perceived to be full of excellencies and beauties of a high order. Where others reasoned, he saw. He was a believer in the contact of the loving human spirit with all that is Divine, and, by help of love, comprehended where reason would have stumbled in despair. This faculty was employed with much energy in his treatment of subjects for the pulpit. We pause, as we read his sermons, to admire the ability with which he handles a most difficult and recondite subject, which many have attempted to explain, but always with modified success. He owned the piercing vision of a loving spirit; so that while he floated on constant wing over all the broad bright lands of truth, he saw, with an eagle glance, what there was of use and beauty beneath. Critics and learned men would return from their investigations, bringing small rewards for long and persevering toil, while he would never come back wanting a golden sheaf as the promise of a richer and fuller harvest.

It is impossible to close these remarks upon Mr. Robertson's preaching without adducing a passage or two in illustration of his eloquence; for he possessed to a very considerable degree the power of speaking to men with all the commanding oratory of a great Christian preacher.

"Go to any churchyard, and stand ten minutes among the gravestones; read inscription after inscription, recording the date of birth, and the date of death, of him who lies below; all the trace which myriads have left behind, of their having done their day's work on God's earth—that is failure—seems so. Cast the eye down the columns of any commander's despatch after a general action. The men fell by thousands, the officers by hundreds. Courage, high hope, self-devotion, ended in smoke—forgotten by the time of the next list of slain; that is the failure of life once more. Cast your eye over the shelves of a public library; there is the hard toil of years, the product of a life of thought; all that remains of it is there in a worm-eaten folio, taken down once in a century. Failure of human life again. Stand by the most enduring of all human labours, the pyramids of Egypt. One hundred thousand men, year by year, raised those enormous piles to protect the corpses of the buried from rude inspection. The spoiler's hand has been there, and the bodies have been rifled from their mausoleum, and three thousand years have written 'failure' upon that. In all that, my Christian brethren, if we look no deeper than the surface, we read the grave of human hope, the apparent nothingness of human labour."

Speaking of the Scriptures in a sermon on "Inspiration," he uttered the following magnificent passage:—"This collection of books has been to the world what no other book has ever been to a nation. States have been founded on its principles. Kings rule by a compact based upon it. Men hold the Bible in their hands when they prepare to give solemn evidence affecting life, death, or property; the sick man is almost afraid to die unless the Book be within reach of his hands; the battle-ship goes into action with one on board whose office is to expound it; its prayers, its psalms, are the language which we use when we speak to God; eighteen centuries have found no holier, no diviner language. If ever there has been a prayer or a hymn enshrined in the heart of a nation, you are sure to find its basis in the Bible. There is no new religious idea given to the world, but it is merely the development of

something given in the Bible. The very translation of it has fixed language and settled the idioms of speech. Germany and England speak as they speak because the Bible was translated. It has made the most illiterate peasant more familiar with the history, customs, and geography of ancient Palestine than with the localities of his own country. Men who know nothing of the Grampians, of Snowdon, or of Skiddaw, are at home in Zion, the Lake of Gennesareth, or among the rills of Carmel. People who know little about London, know by heart the places in Jerusalem where those blessed feet trod which were nailed to the Cross. . . . Even this shows us the influence of the Bible. The orator holds a thousand men for half an hour breathless—a thousand men as one listening to his single word. But this Word of God has held a thousand nations for thrice a thousand years spell-bound; held them by an abiding power, even the universality of its truth; and we feel it to be no more a collection of books, but the Book."

There are many other points in Mr. Robertson's preaching to which we might refer; but these suffice to indicate some of the sources of unmatched and amazing power which he has gained over multitudes of loving and reverent readers in all parts of the world, and amongst every section of the Christian Church. No man, so far as we know, has ever shown such fitness in many respects to be a teacher and inspirer of thoughtful men, since the days when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. During a brief ministry he preached sermons which all coming generations will preserve in an affectionate memory; and thus the man who lived so brief a life, by the measurement of the dial, will continue to preach to an ever-increasing audience, gathered from every nation under heaven. Frederick William Robertson preaches to us from the grave.

It is not wonderful that his influence should be so deep and powerful; at least it will not seem so to any careful and loving readers of his sermons. We are not surprised to hear, as we do through the correspondence of a newspaper at the Antipodes, of ship-passengers sitting round after an escape from awful dangers, listening to

one who reads aloud one of these inimitable discourses; nor to be informed that the political prisoners at Fort Warren, in the Southern States of America, "regularly got up Divine service every Sunday, and as regularly read one of Robertson's sermons." An officer in the army of the United States wrote in 1866 from the State of Mississippi, to the editor of the *Atlantic*, the following words:—

"My object in writing this is to thank you heartily and thoroughly for your thoughtful and appreciative critique of the character and books of the Rev. F. W. Robertson, of Trinity Chapel, Brighton, England. He was my pastor during the years '52 and a part of '53; and he was my guide, counsellor, and friend. I was a young boy then—old enough, however, to understand something of the exceeding beauty and holiness of his character and teaching. It is impossible to describe the love and reverence which the earnest-minded youth of Brighton bore to him, or of his influence over them for good.

"I was a member of the Mechanics' Institute, before which he delivered his wonderful 'Lectures on Poetry;' and although I have travelled widely, heard the greatest orators of America and Europe, been thrown into contact with many noble and eloquent men, I have never met with the man who was his peer. I carried his 'Lectures and Addresses' with me during the entire war—in my knapsack when I was a private, in my valise when an officer; and now that I am again in the service, it is one of the very few books I cannot be without. Thank you, sir, for your good, wise words about him—the best, strongest, tenderest, all-enduring, and Christ-like man of his age."

In those burning words and great uplifting thoughts which compose all his sermons, we feel that we have much of the power which all who knew him attribute to the man. It was known that that voice would never utter a hollow word, but meant all it said. And so it came to pass that once again, as of old, "Wisdom was justified of her children."

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